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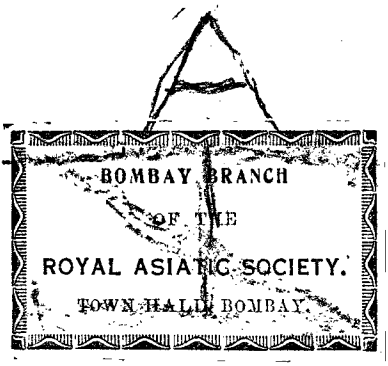

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TIGER SLAYER BY ORDER

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TIGERLAND
REMINISCENCES OF FORTY YEARS' SPORT AND ADVENTURE IN BENGAL
By C. E. GOULDSBURY

THE TIGER SLAYER. *Frontispiece.*

His Shikaris and some trophies.

TIGER SLAYER BY ORDER

(DIGBY DAVIES, LATE BOMBAY POLICE)

BY

C. E. GOULDSBURY
(LATE INDIAN POLICE)
AUTHOR OF "DULALL, THE FOREST GUARD"—A TALE OF SPORT AND ADVENTURES IN BENGAL; "LIFE IN THE INDIAN POLICE"; "TIGERLAND"

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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BY SPECIAL REQUEST OF MR. DIGBY DAVIES TO
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THE RT. HON. LORD HARRIS, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

LATE GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY, DURING WHOSE TENURE
OF GOVERNORSHIP MR. DIGBY DAVIES ENJOYED HIS BEST
YEARS OF SERVICE, AND THROUGH WHOSE KIND OFFICES
HE WAS ENABLED TO CARRY OUT HIS SHOOTING
EXPEDITION INTO SOMALILAND, N.-E. AFRICA

THE AUTHOR

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS work, to which I have given the title of "Tiger Slayer by Order," as being obviously the most suitable, has been compiled entirely from notes and stories, furnished by Mr. Digby Davies, late a Deputy-Inspector-General of the Indian Police, and contains his own experiences as a Police Officer, and Bhil Agent—coupled with the unique office of Tiger Slayer to the Government of Bombay.

Mr. Digby Davies served for over thirty years in that Presidency, and during this long period had many and exceptional opportunities of indulging his great taste for sport, especially when carrying out his duties as "Tiger Slayer." I have, at his request, endeavoured, with the aid of his notes, to construct a tale—or rather, autobiographical narration of his adventures and experiences, and in order to do this have necessarily been obliged to make use of the first person throughout.

To relate another's story is, naturally, more difficult than to tell one's own; but in this case Mr. Davies' accounts of his adventures are so full, and his descriptions of the appearance and habits of the various animals he encountered given in such detail, that my task has been comparatively easy, and a very pleasant one.

In my last book—"Tigerland"—written also in these lines, I was, for reasons given, in the Preface to that work, unfortunately unable to divulge the name of the individual whose experiences I was narrating. Thus, in spite of my explanation, I was undeservedly credited with having experienced the adventures myself.

In the present instance, however, being under no such restriction, I am glad to be in a position to acknowledge

my indebtedness to Mr. Digby Davies by name, for the excellent material which has enabled me to compile this work, as well as for the interesting photographs from which the illustrations have been taken. Mr. Davies' hunting experiences were not confined to India alone, for during one period of leave, he made an expedition to Somaliland where he was singularly fortunate in procuring several elephants and lions, besides specimens of nearly every other wild animal to be found in that country. An account of these adventures is given in this narrative and should make interesting reading from the sportsman's point of view.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity of acknowledging the numerous and very favourable notices accorded by the Press to my last book—"Tigerland"—and venture to hope that the present volume may meet with a similar reception.

AUTHOR.

MALVERN WELLS,
July, 1915.

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ERRATA.

Page 40, line 15, *for* "Pansunba," *read* "Punsunbal."

Page 49, line 11, *for* "numerous," *read* "large."

Page 50, line 29, between "remember" and "one," *insert* "on."

Page 51, line 3, *for* "boxes," *read* "hoaxes."

Page 54, line 26, *for* "keep," *read* "try."

TIGER SLAYER BY ORDER

CHAPTER I

Decide on an Indian career—The lure of big game hunting—Considering ways and means of adopting it professionally—Final resolution—Sail for India, *en route* for Bombay—The pains and pleasures of a voyage to the East—A game of quoits interrupted—Man overboard! attempts at rescue—The shark and its victim—Some remarks about sharks—Superstitions concerning them—The voyage at an end—Anxiety to land explained—"Privilege leave," its object and advantages described—A description of Bombay—First impressions of the East—The elephant caves, or temples, and their gods—The Towers of Silence cemeteries—Swarms of vultures—Gruesome reasons for their presence—Parsis, their origin, customs and religion: an enlightened and interesting race—Preparation for journey to Guzerat—Bullock carts described—Anticipation of sport—Purchase a gun in the Bazar—Discomfort and luxury of railway travelling in India—Full length sleeping accommodation—Long journeys rendered comfortable.

WHEN at the age of nineteen, now some thirty years ago, I set out to seek my fortune in India, I had already made up my mind that whatever career I might adopt, or be compelled by necessity to accept, my leisure hours should be devoted to the hunting of big game. From my earliest childhood upwards, I had read every book on Indian and African sport I was able to procure till by the time my story opens, to become a big-game hunter was the one object of my life. Indeed so infatuated was I with this notion that had I been a free agent at the time, and possessed of sufficient capital to embark on the adventure, I might possibly have adopted big-game hunting as a professional pursuit.

Fortunately for my future, however, I was neither free to choose my own profession nor had I the capital to invest

in any scheme so idiotic, for as I learnt later professional big-game hunting in India is practically tabooed, nor even if permissible to engage in it, would the profit derived from its pursuit cover the cost of ammunition much less provide a livelihood for the hunter.

Nevertheless the fact that big-game shooting was obtainable in India—even if it had to be combined with some less congenial occupation, was quite sufficient to inspire me with the desire to go out.

Thus it came about that on a bright March morning, I found myself and my belongings on board the s.s. ——, *en route* for Bombay, and eventually Guzerat where my father was then commanding the 1st Bombay Grenadiers.

The voyage out was not in any way remarkable, and except for one incident, my experiences were probably much the same as those of the majority of youngsters making this great voyage to the East. The first night on board with all its attendant discomfort and anxiety, followed by days perhaps of sea-sickness and misery—till a calmer sea restores his physical and mental equilibrium, must obviously be endured by all who voyage on the waters, and to those who do so for the first time in their lives, must necessarily prove more irksome.

But after these first few painful days comes a period generally most enjoyable, for amongst the crowd of passengers on board a P. & O. there are always some to be found both capable and willing to cater for the amusement of the rest.

Thus once the stormy waters of the "famous" Bay are passed—and weather conditions consequently more favourable—life on board assumes a very different hue. Dances, concerts, or theatricals now fill up the after-dinner hours, which heretofore had passed with leaded feet, while cricket, deck-quoits or shovel-board tend to shorten the otherwise long periods between meals.

It was while one of these exciting contests was in progress that the exceptional incident I have referred to occurred. The game was one of deck-quoits, so far as I remember, the ship being in the Indian Ocean at the time —about half-way between Aden and Bombay.

It was a lovely morning with hardly a ripple on the

water, breakfast was just over and those of the passengers not actually engaged in the contest were all on deck, some smoking and others interested spectators.

Suddenly there came from somewhere forward that awe-inspiring cry " Man overboard ! " In an instant there was a rush to the side—instinctively the one over which the man had fallen.

The ship was brought to immediately, but before a boat could be lowered the man gave one long piercing scream, threw up his hands, and disappeared.

A few moments later the fin of a shark was seen cutting swiftly through the water, but whether this was the beast concerned we could not tell, probably it was not, for there had been hardly time for it to have disposed of its victim, nor were there any blood-stains on the surface of the water.

The unfortunate man was one of the lascars of the ship, who, while furling an awning, had suddenly lost his balance and fallen overboard, but would, in all probability have been saved, for, like all natives, he could swim like a fish, happier for him had it been otherwise since he would have met with an easier death.

After this sad incident it was remembered that sharks had been seen following the ship, a fact which by the superstitiously-inclined might tend to confirm the belief, said to have been held by ancient mariners, that when a shark follows a ship it is a sign that before long there will be a death on board !

But although this tradition doubtless owes its origin to some coincidental happenings of the kind, it was not really verified in this case, for the Indian Ocean is, as everybody knows, infested with these monsters, and they seem to prefer swimming on the surface to under water. They are, in calm weather, frequently to be seen, and easily distinguished by the peculiar shape of the dorsal fin. That they should follow a ship, moreover, is not at all surprising, considering that a shark is probably the most voracious of all creatures inhabiting sea or land and the amount of offal and edible refuse of all kinds that is constantly being thrown overboard from ships.

However, be this all as it may, the incident cast a gloom over the ship, for to those who had actually seen the man

pulled down, and heard his agonizing scream, the scene was one calculated to impress itself too deeply on the mind to be easily erased.

But fortunately the voyage was now nearly at an end, and three or four days later we dropped anchor in the harbour of Bombay. Here, after the usual trouble and delay, I succeeded at length in re-establishing connection with my heavy luggage—produced from that mysterious receptacle somewhere in the bowels of the ship known as the hold.

My belongings being collected, I lost no time in going ashore, accompanied by many others, all seemingly anxious to be there as speedily as possible. This seemed strange, for the voyage, on the whole, had been a most enjoyable one, but all who have travelled much by sea will probably understand it, for, however pleasant a voyage may have been, it is seldom that any one desires to prolong it, and no sooner has the vessel reached her destination, than all are anxious to be out of her with the least possible delay—even the professional sailorman who makes his ship his home, is apparently no exception to this rule.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is obviously that the average individual is not by nature partial to a life on the ocean waves, but only tolerates it for so long as necessity compels him so to live.

Amongst those who hurried ashore, however, were possibly some returning from three months' privilege leave, and who, having to rejoin their respective stations within a given date, had probably to leave by the first train out.

"Privilege leave," by the way, though a curious and somewhat cryptic combination of words, is one of the conditions of Indian Service, much valued by Anglo-Indian officers, both civil and military, since it is the only form of leave that can be taken on full pay. It is accumulative, but limited to three months at a time.

The principle on which it works is this—for every eleven months' completed service, an officer earns one month's leave, which may, if not availed of then, remain to his credit, and is allowed to accumulate up to a limit of three months. Then at the end of thirty-three months' continuous service, an officer can claim three months' leave of

which he can avail himself at any time. The chief advantage, and in fact object, of this system being that as the whole of this leave is on full pay, the recipient can afford the expense of his passage home and back, and if he travels by the mail, gives him six clear weeks at home. But I am afraid I have rather wandered from my story, so must now come back to it.

Every Englishman landing for the first time in Bombay, must necessarily be struck with the extraordinary contrast it presents to any city or cities he may be acquainted with either in England or even on the Continent, for despite its reputation as the most European of the three Presidential capitals of India, the Oriental atmosphere about it is quite as marked as that of Madras or Calcutta, though possibly its European population—in proportion to its size—is larger and, to use the modern comprehensive phrase, more up-to-date—which is but natural seeing that it lies three days by land and several by sea, closer to London and Paris, the recognized centres of civilization.

In the matter of public institutions, such as Clubs and Hotels, Bombay, at the time I write of, was, and probably is still, far ahead of its two sister cities; the Byculla and Yacht Clubs being well known for their excellence, while Watson's hotel, at that time the only institution worthy of the name in India, had a wide and well-merited reputation for comfort and excellence of its cuisine.

But even while enjoying these comforts, not to say luxuries, products proper of Western civilization, the newly-arrived traveller will find it difficult to forget he is in the East, for the irritating mosquito buzzing continuously around him, or a cockroach—two inches long at least—scurrying across the matted floor, would in themselves be sufficient to remind him of the fact.

But there is evidence more conclusive still in the huge, lofty rooms, with whitewashed walls all bare and punkahs swinging overhead, to say nothing of the white-jacketed black waiters—" Boys " as they are termed, though some seem perilously near the limit of three-score years and ten —who, barefooted and silent, perform their duties with a willingness and promptitude difficult to extract from their smarter brethren in the West.

I cannot now, after so many years, recall very clearly my own first impressions of the East, but as I make no claim to be original, have no doubt that they were something of the nature above described. What I do remember more vividly, however, is an excursion I made in company with several of my fellow passengers, to the Elephanta caves situated about five miles distant from Bombay among the group of islands which shelter the harbour.

These ancient, rock-hewn caves, or rather temples, said to have been dedicated to the god Siva, are approached by a steep ascent for half a mile through rocks, trees and tropical plants of many kinds.

Near the landing place is the life-size figure of an elephant, carved out of a solid rock, whence, probably, the caves derive their name. A long stairway, also cut out of living rock, leads to a temple in which are several figures of gigantic gods and goddesses, including a colossal bust of the three-faced god of Buddha. Another striking figure is that of the god Siva, one of the Hindu Trinity, on whose face severity and revenge, characteristic of his destroying attributes, are strongly depicted.

One of the hands holds a large snake of the Cobra species, and the other certain fruit and flowers, symbolical of blessings for mankind. Though much defaced by the iconoclastic tendencies of the Mohammedans and Portuguese, this wonderful temple still retains much of its original splendour.

We also visited the famous " Towers of Silence," which stand in a large garden in the highest part of Malabar Hill, and are surrounded by a great quantity of trees swarming with vultures, who in their countless hundreds occupy every branch. The reason for the number and continual presence of these ill-omened birds is a gruesome one, for these Towers of Silence are used by the sect known as the Parsis for the disposal of their dead; the bodies, all uncoffined as they are, being laid out on the summit of the towers, purposely to be devoured by these birds.

It is a curious, not to say revolting method of disposing of one's dead, but the process is simple and effective, for the bodies rest on a grating, thus as soon as the birds have stripped off the flesh, the bones fall through into a pit

below, whence they are removed by the relatives, through subterranean passages under the towers and cast into the sea.

Curiously enough, however, the Parsis, except for this barbarous fashion of treating their defunct relations, are a singularly civilized and intelligent race. Believed to be descendants of the ancient Persians who migrated to India on the conquest of their country by the Arabs, they appear to have settled down in large numbers in Bombay, where they are frequently to be found filling important positions both under Government and in the commercial world. They are mostly good scholars too, and almost invariably speak several languages.

In addition to their curious burial customs they have some others almost as unique as, for instance, the practice of benevolence, which being one of the great principles of their religion is carried to such an extent that a Parsi beggar is a thing unknown. Then again, they are Fire-Worshippers, and as such probably the only people in the world who do not smoke, as their intense reverence for this element debars them from using it for so trivial a purpose as the smoking of a hookah, pipe, or cigar. In fact, taking them all round, the Parsis would appear to be the most unique and interesting people of any that inhabit British India, as they are probably the most enlightened.

* * * * * *

After a stay of two or three days in Bombay, I prepared to set out on my journey to Guzerat, part of which was to be performed by train and the rest by road in bullock carts. This last is a mode of travel much disliked by Europeans as a rule, being slow and generally uncomfortable, but I was looking forward to it for I had learnt from inquiries I had made that the road passed through vast cultivated plains on which antelopes in hundreds were frequently to be seen.

This discovery naturally roused my sporting instincts, but it had come so unexpectedly that it found me unprepared. For some reason unexplained—financial, most probably !—neither a gun nor a rifle had been included in my outfit, and I had hitherto trusted to being able to beg, borrow, or steal one or the other from my father when we

met, but this hope, justifiable though it afterwards proved, did not cover the present difficulty, viz., being without any weapon more deadly than a pen-knife with which to wage war on the antelope.

I might, of course, have bought a gun or rifle at one of the European gun-smiths, but only for a price far greater than I could afford, so finally decided to try to pick up one in the bazar, where guns, of a sort, are occasionally to be found.

Afraid of trusting so important a purchase to anybody else, I went myself to the bazar, and eventually succeeded in securing an old, single-barrel, muzzle-loading gun, for what seemed to me an absurdly low price. It was a risky investment though at best, for as a rule guns bought in a bazar are apt to be more dangerous to the user than to the animal he may fire at. However, this one was evidently of superior make, for though old it still bore traces of finer finish than is generally found in such guns purchased in bazars.

The journey by rail was not a long one, nor of any interest—railway journeys in India seldom are, and, moreover, are generally uncomfortable, because of the heat and dust, though in one respect Indian railway travel is more luxurious than in Europe, and this is that every first and second-class passenger is entitled to full length sleeping accommodation at nights, which renders the long journeys, so often necessary, more tolerable than they otherwise would be.

CHAPTER II

A journey by bullock cart—Come across antelope—A successful stalk—Skinning my first trophy—Exhibiting my prize—Join the 19th Native Infantry—A martinet C.O.—Life at Malegown—Hurdle races and a fall—A novel remedy—The station skikari and his wiles—Paying for experience—Beating for a phantom panther—Counterfeited foot-prints—The fraud detected—Flight of the culprit—Pursuit and punishment—A description of the offender—*Experientia docet*—Unreliability of native information—Lying to please—Other reasons for false reports of game—Tact and temper necessary to success—Rewards for true information, money well laid out—How to acquire experience—A sad incident in our Station life—Sky-larking ends in a disaster—Going to a race meeting by rail—Walking along the foot-board—Approaching a bridge—Warned too late—Cannoned off into the river—Body subsequently recovered.

It was early morning when I left the railway station, at which I had been deposited during the night, and started in my bullock cart on the journey by road.

We had not gone very far when we came across vast herds of antelope. One small herd was feeding in a cotton-field some distance apart from all the rest, so this was the lot I elected to stalk. Working my way cautiously towards them, I gradually approached within range when, taking a long deliberate aim, I fired at what appeared to be the largest buck.

The beast fell to the shot at once, and by the time I had run up to it, was dead. I was naturally much delighted, for this was the first shot I had ever fired at any four-legged animal larger than a rabbit, whereas this one, though only an antelope, was at any rate regarded as big game.

The buck was quite an ordinary one, but to me, as my first sporting trophy, most precious, so much so in fact that I insisted on skinning it myself, after which performance, very indifferently performed I fear, we proceeded on our way.

The journey, much to my disappointment, was completed without further adventure, and in due course we arrived at my father's bungalow, when I remember well, how, after the first greetings, I instantly produced my trophy, and with what pride I related how I had procured it, indeed had it been a tiger that I had slain I could have scarcely been prouder of the feat!

All sportsmen, probably, will understand my feelings for the first comparatively big thing shot by a novice has always a special value in his eyes, but looking back now, after thirty years, I feel ashamed to think that I should have made all this fuss about a wretched deer.

After spending some time with my father at Guzerat, I went on to Malegown to join the 19th Native Infantry to which I was attached, for a course of drill, prior to taking up an appointment in the Indian Police for which service I had already obtained a nomination.

The 19th was at that time commanded by a certain Colonel J——, one of the good old school, who, though a martinet and somewhat given to exceedingly strong language on parade, was, nevertheless, very popular with the youngsters in the regiment.

Our life at Malegown, a small, uninteresting station, was not very exciting, but weekly gymkhana meetings, to which friends from neighbouring stations were invariably invited, helped to pass the time. Those sports usually consisted of cross-country racing, tent-pegging, tilting at the ring, etc.

Having ridden from my childhood, I was naturally a good rider, and used consequently to pull off many of these events—the money prizes helping considerably to the paying of my mess bills. In the hurdle races, I remember, the jumps were usually fairly stiff, and on one occasion came perilously near to ending my career. Fortunately, however, I escaped with only a good shaking, notwithstanding that the horse had rolled over me and that I was picked up unconscious and carried away in that condition from the course. A strong whisky and soda, as I learnt later, was the only remedy administered and apparently with marvellous results, for I came round at once, at least, so I was informed, for I was not in a position to know how

long I was unconscious. At any rate the cure was evidently complete for I have no recollection of feeling any the worse for the fall.

Amongst the other "griffs" * in the regiment were several as keen on sport as myself, but beyond small game —and an antelope occasionally—the sport we obtained was not on a very extensive scale. To the station shikari, however, we were the source of a good income, for taking advantage of our unquenchable desire to bag something really big, he was constantly arranging beats for various tigers and leopards, none of which had any real existence, nevertheless, the beaters had to be paid every time, and at a rate which allowed of a goodly sum being pocketed by the shikari.

On one occasion I remember, he brought us news of a big panther, supposed to be in a jungle some thirty miles distant. This information being more than usually circumstantial, several of us decided to go after the beast, fully convinced that we were at last to be recompensed for all the disappointments we had suffered.

On arrival at the jungle we found some two hundred beaters assembled, and elaborate arrangements made for a beat. The guns being duly posted, the beaters were solemnly marshalled and went through the jungle to the music of tom-toms and other noise-producing instruments of various tones and power, making sufficient racket to rouse any animal within five miles of the place, but without any result, for there were none within that distance of the spot. We tried a second time, but with no better success; finally we decided on following up what were stated to be the animal's tracks, but had not proceeded very far, when my orderly, who was something of a shikari himself, suddenly burst out laughing. "Look, sahib," he exclained, pointing to some foot-prints more perfect than the rest, "those tracks are made by hand!" and sure enough they were, for looking at them closer, we now could see they had been carefully prepared to represent the foot-prints of a large panther.

The shikari, finding himself detected, bolted at once; but furious at the trick he had played us, I ran after him,

* Short for Griffen, meaning in Anglo-Indian parlance a Novice.

thirsting for revenge. He knowing this and probably also guessing the form that it would take if he allowed himself to be caught, did his best to get away. It was a good race, for though I was younger, and probably faster, he had a good start, and, moreover, was not encumbered with a superfluity of clothing or boots. However, I caught him up at last, but my anger by this time having somewhat cooled down, I let him off quite lightly as compared with his offence.

This was, I think, one of the worst disappointments I ever experienced in pursuit of sport, for it is seldom that a fraud is so deliberately manufactured. That native information is often unreliable is quite true; but there is generally some foundation for it, such as a tiger or leopard having been heard or seen in the locality, or the skeleton or a few bones found of some domestic animal believed to have been killed.

And yet from the general appearance and character of the offending shikari in question, no one would have supposed him capable of concocting a trick so well thought out and ingenious. A Mohammedan by caste, he was nevertheless addicted to strong waters, and when off duty was not infrequently seen drunk. In other respects, too, he was a low type of native distinctly more stupid than intelligent. In dress, too, as I have already hinted, he was not what might be called particular. A generally unclean turban and a string round his waist over which hung, fore and aft, a narrow strip of cotton cloth, plus a brown blanket, carried, not worn over his shoulder, was all that he had on in the way of a "suit," while a brass badge hung on his person described him as "Emamdeen, the station shikari." This badge of office being, in his estimation no doubt, the most important part of his attire, at any rate was the only evidence of civilization about him.

After administering the well-deserved correction to this prince of deceivers, we wended our way homewards, sadder and wiser men than when we had set out on this adventure, and resolved to keep the matter to ourselves lest the ridicule of those who had refused to join the expedition should be added to our discomfiture.

But we had counted without that extraordinary,

almost wireless-like telegraphy by which news in India is so rapidly and mysteriously conveyed, for when on our return that night we went in to dinner we found that every member of the mess was in full possession of the facts. The chaff that we were consequently subjected to may therefore be imagined, though amongst these scoffers there was probably not one who would have detected the fraud any sooner than we did, for the counterfeited pugs, as I have said, had been exceedingly well done.

For some time after this incident we devoted our leisure moments to the hunting of smaller and less important game, and any news of tiger or leopard kills brought in, unless absolutely verified or within a reasonable distance from the station, were left severely alone.

This incident, however, was only another verification of that ancient Latin proverb *Experientia docet*, which is nowhere better exemplified than when applied to Indian big-game shooting; firstly, for the reason that the Aryan brother is not invariably truthful as to the information he brings in, not that his reports are always deliberately false, on the contrary there is generally some foundation for his story, but being always desirous of pleasing his sahib, he often goes out of his way to repeat not what has actually occurred, but what he thinks the latter would *like* to hear. Thus, if a leopard happens to have killed a dog in his village he will walk several miles into the station and report that a tiger has killed a bullock, simply because he knows that the sahib would sooner have news of a tiger than a leopard!

Or again, if the inhabitants of a village have any reason, however slight, for suspecting the presence of either of these dangerous animals in any adjacent jungle, they will generally dispatch one of their number, usually the village chokidar or watchman, to the nearest camp or station with a circumstantial report to the effect either that the animal has actually been seen or that it has taken up its abode in a certain jungle which he is ready to point out.

For making a practically false report like this, however, there is usually an underlying reason, over and above the mere desire to please the sahib, for as it is assumed that the

latter will take the bait at once, they know the result must be that the suspected jungle, or jungles, will be thoroughly beaten out by beaters, who, incidentally, will pocket two annas a piece, hence should the animal be there it will be either killed or driven off and thus relieve the villagers of its presence, or if the beat should prove a blank, set their minds at rest by thus proving that no dangerous animal is there.

Such then are some of the traps into which the embryonic Indian sportsman, unfamiliar with India and her people, is likely to fall and generally does, until personal experiences such as the one I have described have taught him to estimate the proper value of any information he receives before deciding to act on it. But even if after he has done this he goes out to the spot only to find that the information was false or grossly exaggerated, he must be very careful to resist the temptation—often a very strong one—to deal harshly with the informant, for it must be remembered that in the pursuit of big game, especially leopards and tigers, everything depends on the receipt of prompt information of "kills," and as these are usually of village cattle, it is the villagers only who can supply this information.

Hence it is obviously necessary for the sportsman to cultivate friendly relationships with these men and to gain their confidence, which can best be done by kind treatment, generally and by always rewarding liberally any individual who brings in accurate information.

Money thus expended will in the end be found to have been well spent, for in India, as I have said before, news is rapidly transmitted, thus the name of a sahib who pays rewards will soon be spread abroad, and men will travel many miles to bring him information of a kill or other evidence of a tiger or leopard's presence, of which he could not otherwise have heard.

Nor would he be necessarily out of pocket in paying for this information, as there is a Government reward for the destruction of such animals which he can claim by producing the head and skin. The sums vary in amount in different provinces, but are always on a fairly liberal scale, hence amply sufficient for the informer who is usually

an indigent individual to whom even a couple of rupees will spell riches, and five almost a fortune.

* * * * * *

I remained for some months with the regiment at Malegown, learning my drill and incidentally acquiring considerable experience of jungle life and sport, for amongst the senior officers were one or two old shikaris as willing to relate their adventures and experiences as I was to hear of them, and in this way picked up much valuable information, which in after years stood me in good stead. So that on the whole, life at this little station, if not very exciting, was at any rate instructive and decidedly enjoyable. On one occasion, however, a gloom was cast over our small community by the death of one of our young officers under circumstances so sad that it made a great impression on us all. He and a midshipman, on leave from a man-of-war lying in Bombay harbour, were travelling to Ahmedabad for the race-week by train, and on the journey, wishing to join some friends, who were in another carriage, they got out on to the footboard and were walking along it when the midshipman, who was in front, saw that they were approaching a bridge. He called out to warn his companion, meanwhile flattening himself up against the door. The other attempted to do the same, but being a much bigger man, and possibly less agile, was cannoned off and fell into the river below, whence his body was subsequently recovered.

CHAPTER III

Leave Malegown for Khandesh—Appointed Assistant Political Agent and Adjutant Bhil Police Corps—My chief, a fine old sportsman—Air-guns dangerous at times—A marvellous performance—Some reminiscences of my early youth—An accommodating tutor—Questionable justice—My headquarters in Khandesh—A palatial residence—Description of my duties—A banyan tree tribunal—Some accounts of the Bhils, their belief in witchcraft—Omens and superstitions, love of sport—Legend of their origin—Life in the station—Christmas camps—Running amok—A thrilling experience—Shooting a Havildar—My first tiger, a description of the beat—Rejoicings in camp—An unselfish sportsman—Efficiency of a ·500 Rigby Express rifle—The best weapon in those days for tigers—Diversity of opinion as to rifles—Various weapons or projectiles used by well-known sportsmen—To be judged by results—Best rifles for soft-skinned and heavy game, described in next chapter.

HAVING completed my course of drill, I left Malegown, parting from my companions in the regiment with much regret and joined my appointment in Khandesh, to which district I had been posted as Assistant Superintendent of Police and Adjutant of the Bhil Corps, under that fine old sportsman Colonel Oliver Probyn, C.I.E., to whom in grateful remembrance for many kindnesses received, I have devoted a special chapter.

Some time before I became acquainted with him he had had the misfortune to lose his right arm and two fingers of his left hand through the bursting of an air-gun, yet notwithstanding being thus handicapped, he still remained the splendid shot and rider that he had always been.

Strangely enough, though, he had despaired of ever handling a rifle again, and it was merely through a friend at a picnic casually challenging him to shoot at an empty bottle that led to his taking to his shooting again.

It appears that when handed the rifle by his friend, instead of firing at the bottle, he, doubtless preferring a

living target, aimed at a small bird perched on a tree a long way off, and, to the amazement of those present, brought it down. It was a marvellous performance, and as a first attempt at rifle-shooting with one hand, probably unsurpassed; hence, it is not surprising that, with the self-confidence born of this extraordinary feat, he should eventually have gained the reputation of being one of the finest shots and tiger-hunters India has known.

This reference to air-guns reminds me of a youthful experience of my own in connection with one of these weapons. The event, however, had no such tragic ending as the one described, though it terminated somewhat unpleasantly to the one principally concerned, viz., a French tutor, who, for his sins, perhaps, was occupying the unenviable position of bear-leader and instructor to my brother and myself. He was, however, a most good-natured individual, and taking advantage of his disposition we persuaded him to procure for us an air-gun or air-cane, as these dangerous weapons were then called. Fortunately for him, however, the one he had obtained for us was not very powerful, for we had no sooner mastered the intricacies of the weapon, than, taking further advantage of his amiability, we started our shooting by making use of his person as a target.

This went on for some time much to our edification, though—so far as I remember—not without some feeble protests from our victimised preceptor. At length one day we were caught in the act by the two old maiden ladies who had had the misfortune to be constituted our guardians until such time as we should be too old for feminine control, which period, however, judging from our exploits, had seemingly arrived already.

These two old dames, possibly under the impression that our shots were fired in anger, instead of as a pastime, were horrified beyond measure; but with commendable promptitude and courage, immediately disarmed us, confiscating the weapon.

Much as we resented these arbitrary proceedings at the moment, we came in time to realize that they had probably been necessary, for we were wise enough to know that tutors were not intended to be made use of as targets, therefore,

having so misused him, the confiscation of the offending weapon seemed to us quite a natural precautionary measure.

But what we failed to understand, either at the time or later, was the subsequent action of the "authorities" with reference to our luckless tutor, who, doubtless much to his amazement, too, was summarily dismissed! This to our budding notions of justice and fair dealing seemed altogether wrong, for—as we well knew—he had not participated in the pastime of his own free will, nor had it afforded him amusement, on the contrary, for the part he had played was scarcely an amusing one.

But to return to events more modern. My head-quarters in the Khandesh district were at Dhurumgoan, where I lived in the palatial mansion built by Outram of Indian Mutiny fame. It was naturally much too large for me, indeed some idea of its size may be gathered from the fact that it is now a cotton factory! Fortunately, in India, bachelors are not expected to furnish their abodes on a European scale.

My duties were not of a very onerous description, my time being chiefly occupied in studying native languages, and preparing for Departmental Examinations. Nor was there much of office work in those days. Many a land or other dispute, which would now run to reams of paper and many months' delay, were then settled under the village banyan tree by Colonel Probyn, who, in his capacity of Bhil Agent, adjusted quarrels too, and released many a hard-pressed debtor from the clutches of the exacting money-lender. Indeed in the year 1870 the pressure of Gujar * money-lenders in the Western District, aroused so much ill-feeling that but for Colonel Probyn's intervention and his great personal influence, a general rising of the Bhils would undoubtedly have taken place.

As a great portion of my Indian life was passed amongst these people, and consequently many of the adventures I am about to relate are connected with them, a short account of this tribe may prove of interest.

Though found in small numbers in every part of Khandesh, the bulk of the Bhil population inhabit the western,

* Generally capitalists and landholders in North-west Khandesh.

and wilder portion of the district. They are quite distinct from any other race in India, and are the true aborigines of their country. The typical Khandesh Bhil, the wild woodsman of the Satpuda mountains, is a dark, well-made, active and hardy individual, with high cheek-bones, wide nostrils, and almost African in feature. His dialect is a mixture of Hindustani and Marathi with Guzeratti terminations.

Strong believers in witchcraft, they have "Barvas," or hereditary sorcerers, whom they consult on all occasions, particularly when planning some plundering raid, and whose advice they invariably follow. Great attention is paid to omens, as, for instance, if a bird screams on the left, or a fox or snake crosses the path and escapes, there will be no success that day. On the other hand, should a bird call on the right or a dead snake be seen, the enterprise will end successfully.

In character they are thriftless, addicted to drinking spirits, and as a rule averse to steady work, but on the whole the Bhils as a people are simple, honest and faithful, and above all, excellent sportsmen, their love of jungle life and skill as shikaris being evidently inherent, for in all my long experience of them I never met a Bhil who was not possessed of all the qualities which contribute to the making of a good shikari, and as to their honesty, I can say with absolute truth that during the many years I passed amongst them I never missed the value of so much as a rupee.

The Hindu legend of their origin is that of an union of the god Mahadoo with a beautiful woman, name apparently unknown. The result of this union was several sons, amongst them one ill-favoured and vicious, whose sins culminated in killing his father's favourite bull. For this offence he was banished an outcast to the hills and there became the founder of the Bhils. The word Bhil being derived, as is supposed, from the Dravidian "Billi," meaning a bow.

It was not until I was appointed to succeed Oliver Probyn as Bhil Agent and Tiger Slayer to Government, as will be referred to later, that I learnt more of these very interesting people, a further description of whom and of my duties in the above dual capacities will be given later.

Meanwhile, as Assistant Superintendent of Police and Adjutant of the Bhil Corps, my life was enjoyable enough. We were but a small community it is true, but frequently visited the neighbouring stations for race meetings, in fact on any plausible excuse—besides we had many pleasant shooting camps ourselves and especially at Christmas time when, as is the case all over India, such camps are regular institutions and usually of a very festive order; except at large stations where instead of shooting camps these Christmas gatherings usually take the form of race meetings or gymkhanas at headquarters.

The quasi-military portion of my duties was on the whole fairly monotonous, but on one occasion we had an exceedingly exciting experience with a Naik or corporal of the Bhil Corps.

This enterprising individual, electing to run amok one morning when Probyn and I were on parade, shot his Havildar dead, then loosed off into a squad of recruits at drill, wounding one severely.

Happening to be quite close to him at the time, I ran up and disarmed him, narrowly escaping a shot he fired at me, the bullet hitting the ground at my feet. The fact of my being in rapid motion at the time probably saved my life, for the man was evidently a good shot, as proved by his practice on the Havildar.

With the exception of this exciting little incident, the only other shooting adventure worth recording that I experienced during these early years of my service while stationed in Khandesh, was one which no true sportsman would be likely to forget, since it was no less important an event than the bagging of my first tiger.

Although it is now nearly thirty years since this red-letter day in my life, I can still recall quite vividly those few exciting moments of that day when, perched on the branches of a tree—my rifle ready for instant use—I waited with bated breath for the animal to appear, and when it came out at last, the first tiger I had ever seen in its wild state, how anxiously I watched its every movement, wondering at its enormous muscular developments, extraordinary girth of limbs, especially noticeable in the forearm and wrist, its beautiful white beard and bristling whiskers, all

so different to the long, lithe, skinny animals on which I had often gazed with such longing admiration in the Zoo! It was a grand and yet an awe-inspiring sight, for there is something in the personality of a tiger which fills the mind with thoughts such as no other wild animal inspires. With the sportsman, suitably armed and bent on the destruction of the beast, this feeling is not one of fear, but rather of respect, as for a foe whom he knows instinctively will require all his skill to beat.

But what perhaps interested me as much as the tiger itself was the way in which, under the directions of my chief, the beat had been arranged. For while the main body of the beaters were advancing through the jungle, others had been posted up in trees, at twenty or thirty paces' interval, as stops to prevent the animal sneaking off unobserved, up some smaller pathway or ravine instead of passing by my post. These tactics were admirably carried out for, as already mentioned, there are no better shikaris in India than the Bhils, or any who can compete with them in the art of driving the quarry in the direction required.

Thus, each time the tiger had attempted to turn off to right or left, the stop posted nearest to the spot had succeeded in preventing it, either by tapping lightly with his stick upon a branch, or by giving a low cough—these sounds, slight as they were, being quite sufficient for the animal's keen sense of hearing to detect.

Finally he was driven up to within a hundred yards of my māchān and then, objecting to any further hustling, came charging past my post at racing speed. Waiting till I thought I had made certain of my shot, I fired, but, seemingly, without effect, for the beast held on with undiminished speed, covering with each bound some fifteen feet at least. Continuing at this pace for about five and twenty yards, he suddenly collapsed, falling into some brushwood, where we found him later lying on his side—stone dead.

There was great rejoicing in the camp that night, and to celebrate the occasion Probyn insisted on my drinkng the major portion of a bottle of champagne, for was not this my first tiger, and killed with one shot too? But,

strictly speaking, the triumph should have been his, for we had drawn for places and though he got the best naka,* he had given it up to me. However, good sportsman that he was, he could not have been more pleased if he had shot the beast himself.

I may mention that I had not on this occasion used the single barrel gas-pipe of which mention has been made, but a ·500 Express by Rigby, taking 6 drams of powder and bullet of pure lead. This is probably, or rather was in those days, the best kind of rifle for use against a tiger, or any of the larger soft-skinned animals, but, as there seems to be such diversity of opinion on the subject, I propose in the next chapter to give a description of the various weapons and projectiles used by well-known sportsmen and myself on different kinds of game, and with what result, so that the reader may judge for himself not only as to the rifle best suited for tigers, but for most heavy game as well.

* Position or post.

CHAPTER IV

Some talk about rifles for big game—Efficiency of small bores doubtful—Selous on this subject—Knowledge of anatomy an important factor—A quotation from Sanderson—An advocate for heavy weapons—Rifles recommended—Sir Samuel Baker's opinion on experiments I have made—Various projectiles used, with results—Some rifles I have used—Apology for digression, narrative resumed—The district of Khandesh described—How the Bhils were civilized—The necessity for a local and special officer—His duties—Experience, how gained—The origin of the office of Tiger Slayer—Cattle and human beings destroyed by tigers—Khandesh a stronghold of wild beasts—Special body of hunters from Bhil Corps—Government elephants—Useful to shoot off, or as beaters.

THE question as to which is the rifle best suited for big and dangerous game is a somewhat controversial one, and I am aware, while recording my opinion, that I differ from many great authorities on this subject; but every sportsman who has actually experimented with rifles of various patterns, on big game must necessarily be guided by the results he has obtained and naturally favours the weapon which he has found most successful.

Personally, I am no believer in small bores in the hands of ordinary sportsmen, they lack the smashing power and paralyzing effect of the heavy bores. I propose, later on, illustrating the truth of this theory by anecdotes, and as I have on more than one occasion been in a tight corner, and was once severely mauled by a tiger, the marks of whose teeth and claws I bear to this day, I trust my observations will act as a warning to young sportsmen against rashly entrusting themselves to light and so-called "handy" weapons when in pursuit of dangerous game.

Selous, the great African hunter, advocates small bores, but it should be remembered that that celebrated sportsman, with his intimate knowledge of anatomy and life-experience of big-game shooting, knows how and where to

strike the game in a vital spot. This is exemplified by his having on one occasion shot five elephants in succession with a ·450 Gibbs Metford, an extraordinarily small bore rifle to use against such very heavy game.

I have myself killed several bison and buffalo with small bore rifles too, on one occasion with a ·360 Express, but these were all picked shots. It is not, however, always possible to obtain a head or shoulder shot, therefore the rifle for such exceedingly heavy game should be one powerful enough to kill, or at any rate to stop such an animal on whatever part of the body it may be hit.

Then, again, to quote that well-known sportsman, the late Mr. Sanderson: "It is sometimes argued," he writes, "that hundreds of large animals have been bagged with 12 or 14-bore rifles or even smaller weapons. True, but how many more have escaped or have been consigned to die lingering deaths that could have been secured with heavier metal! A 14 or 16-bore with 4 drams of powder, is sufficient to kill even an elephant, if a fair shot can be had at his brain, but supposing the elephant to be rushing through a tangled brake of long grass, when only a hurried and indistinct shot can be had at him, the smaller gun would be useless unless its ball reached his brain, whilst the heavy projectile would floor or stun, even if it did not kill him. A rifle for heavy game should be capable of meeting these contingencies, not being adapted only for picked shots and bright moments."

For ordinary sportsmen, therefore, I think there is no better weapon for thick-skinned animals such as elephants, rhino, buffaloes and bison than an 8 or 10-bore Paradox gun or rifle, burning 8 or 10 drams of powder. I prefer a Paradox gun as it is lighter than a rifle of the same calibre, a great advantage in African hunting of which so much is done from the saddle. It also gives a higher velocity and greater penetration with the same charge of powder, and the recoil is less. For soft-bodied or thin-skinned animals such as tigers, lions, leopards and bears a ·500 or ·577 Express, burning 5 or 6 drams of powder, would be the most suitable weapon.

Having now said my say about rifles, I will add a few lines about the quality of the projectiles, which, in my

opinion, are the best suited for big or dangerous game. The late Sir Samuel Baker, in his most interesting book, "Wild Beasts and their Ways," states: "The duty of the bullet is to preserve its direct course; it should possess a power of great penetration, should not be easily deflected, and together with penetrating power, it should produce a stunning effect by an overpowering and striking energy."

I have experimented with all kinds of bullets on Indian and African game, and have come to the conclusion that for elephants, buffaloes, rhino, and bison, the solid hardened or steel core conical bullet, 150 grains, is the best. This bullet has an enormous penetrating power and is capable of crashing through every opposing obstacle such as massive bone and muscle, a matter of great importance should the beast be charging, or rushing through high grass or bush, when only a hurried and indistinct shot can be had at him. For tigers, lions, panthers, bears and the larger Indian or African deer or antelope respectively, I think the long Rigby or Holland bullet, 570 grains of pure lead, with a small hollow and a heavy, solid base to ensure necessary penetration and expansion is the best.

A bullet of this description on striking an animal will not splinter up, but assume a mushroom shape, also it is not easily deflected. The small, light bullet invariably used with Express rifles, though admirable for small antelopes such as black buck, chinkara, etc., is, in my opinion, too hollow, consequently too light for dangerous game. It smashes up into minute fragments immediately on impact, merely inflicting a surface wound, and is, moreover, easily deflected on striking a twig or any other obstruction.

I have invariably used 10 or 8-bore rifles against elephants, buffaloes, rhino, and bison, and a ·500 Rigby Express for tigers, lions, leopards, etc., each with the projectile already described, though, at a pinch I have never hesitated to use my ·500 Express against heavier game—elephants and buffalo—using, of course, a *solid* bullet. This rifle was originally built by Rigby for a well-known sportsman in Madras, and has been my companion for over twenty-six years. With it I have shot all kinds of game both large and small.

I have had no experience with cordite rifles, but I believe they require very careful treatment which would be a serious drawback in wild country where weapons are often subjected to very severe usage. Nevertheless, these rifles, as with all things new, are probably being largely used by the modern big-game hunter, and, for all I know, may possibly be superior—bore for bore—to those I have described; but if so, they must be extraordinarily efficient weapons of destruction.

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I will now resume my narrative, which, I fear, I have too long neglected, and I ought perhaps also to apologize for this long digression, because, except to sporting readers, the preceding pages of this chapter must necessarily make dull reading; but I have always held that a work which purports to be a book on sport should be instructive as well as entertaining, if only for the reason that it is as likely to be read by budding sportsmen thirsting for knowledge as by those who have passed their lives in the pursuit of big game.

Not that I am suggesting that the knowledge derived from my own experiences of big-game shooting can compare with those of such past masters in the art as the two great sporting writers whom I have quoted, for such is very far from my intention. At the same time, I may say, without fear of contradiction, that I have had exceptional advantages, in the matter of opportunities for judging of the merits of sporting weapons of all kinds and of studying the habits of most wild animals which come under the definition of big game.

I was also specially fortunate in having as my mentor for some years that prince of sportsmen, Colonel Probyn, under whom, as I have already stated, I served during the earlier period of my Indian career, and whom I eventually succeeded in his dual appointment of Bhil Agent and Tiger Slayer, when, having reached the age of fifty-five, he was obliged by the rules of the Service, to retire.

One of his last official acts before retiring was to pass a strong recommendation to the Government that I should be appointed to succeed him, and thus, despite my youth and comparative inexperience, obtained for me the

much-coveted and, from my point of view, most interesting appointment in the Service.

The District of Khandesh, at the time of which I write, was a wild tract of country some 15,000 square miles in area, bordered on the north by the Satpuda range, a mountain tract from thirty to forty miles wide, teeming with wild animals, especially tigers and panthers, and peopled by a once savage race of men, the Bhils, whom Government gradually weaned from savagery by the wise policy of free grants of land, seed and cattle, which induced them to settle down as cultivators. Since the beginning of British rule these people had always given trouble, and an attempt to bring them to order by force having failed, the above measures were adopted, in addition to enlisting them in special corps. The inherent lawless spirit of these wild men, however, necessitated the constant presence of a British officer amongst them, hence the appointment of a Bhil Agent, whose duties were heavy and varied, *e.g.*, such gangs as were still in revolt had to be reduced and kept in order, offenders punished or committed for trial, disputes to be settled and complaints redressed, saving them from the clever and unscrupulous money-lenders, the Gujars, of whom mention has already been made, etc., etc.,

I was very fortunate in being selected for the appointment of Agent, as the wandering life amongst the hill men suited me to perfection, and gave me many opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of their feelings and customs which often proved of immense value in my official duties, while as to jungle-lore and wood-craft, the information I derived from them was both in quantity and quality such as it would be impossible to obtain from any other source, for living as these men do in close companionship, so to speak, with the animal denizens of the jungle, the knowledge they possess of wild beasts and their ways, is naturally much greater than that of any other natives I have met.

But if the information and experience I had thus acquired were of such value to me in the discharge of my Bhil Agency duties, they were of infinitely greater value in my capacity of Tiger Slayer, as was only natural since the knowledge I had gained enabled me in time to supervise efficiently

the work of my shikaris and even, when the necessity arose, as it sometimes did, to track and locate a tiger myself, or tell by a glance at its pugs whether they were fresh or some hours old, accomplishments which, though most useful to the hunters of big game, few Europeans take the trouble to acquire.

To me, however, all the details of my work as Tiger Slayer had an extraordinary fascination, and, next to my old chief through whose influence I had obtained it, I often found myself blessing the individual who had created this appointment.

The post—probably the only one of its kind in all India—was held, as I have already mentioned, in conjunction with that of Bhil Agent, and as far as I could gather from inquiries and perusal of old records, had been originally created to meet a pressing necessity due to the increase of wild animals in the District. In those disturbed times at the beginning of the last century, large tracts of land in Khandesh passed from villages into forest from which tigers roamed and dealt destruction in the very heart of the District. In 1822, for example, five hundred human beings and twenty thousand head of cattle were destroyed by wild animals, tigers being the principal destroyers. This wholesale destruction of human beings and cattle, which had apparently been going on for some time, led to some stringent preventive measures being adopted, for I found that during the months of May, June and July of that year, no less than sixty tigers were killed.

In spite of these efforts, which were apparently made by Sir James Outram and his successors, tigers and other beasts of prey continued in such large numbers that the fear of them kept waste and desolate some of the richest tracts in Khandesh. Even as late as 1857 this District, more than almost any part of Western India, continued as a stronghold for wild beasts. Indeed, so dangerous and destructive had they become, that at length a special party of the Bhil Corps were especially deputed as tiger hunters and placed at the disposal of the then Superintendent of Police and Bhil Agent for the destruction of these animals.

When I took up the appointment this special party

consisted of forty men of the Bhil Corps, to which were attached two Government elephants, to be used to shoot off or as beaters. In addition to this official staff, I had my own shikaris, four excellent individuals to whom I owed a great deal of my success and are therefore entitled to be honourably mentioned. A description of them, therefore, will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

A description of my shikaris—A reliable quartette—The wild man of the woods—A true Aborigine—My first introduction to him—The palaver—Brother Shikaris—Become the best of friends—His progress in life—The tiger, and how to get him—The best season for tiger-shooting—Baiting the jungles—Looking up the baits—Tracking by foot-prints—Stops on trees—The drive—Monkeys and peacocks as guides—Random shooting to be avoided—Following up a wounded tiger—Dangerous but necessary—Precautions to be taken—The art of tracking—How to be acquired—Difficult at first—Hyena or panther—How a tiger can be distinguished from a tigress—An adventure on the Satpuda hills—A tigress and her cubs—Arranging the beat—The tigress viewed—A beater charged—Seeks refuge in a tree—Seized by the leg—I go to the rescue—The wounded man sent into camp—Tigress takes cover—Refuses to come out—We attack her in her stronghold—A furious charge and subsequent retreat—Darkness sets in—We leave her for the night.

THE names of the four shikaris referred to were Etoo, Gungdya, Bapu and Sabha, and a pluckier or more reliable quartette would be difficult to find. Etoo was a Havildar, or Sergeant, in the Bhil Corps. He belonged to a family of shikaris, and his father before him had been Probyn's favourite gun-carrier in the days of muzzle loaders. His son, Gungdya, a chip of the old block, was also a private in the corps, a quiet unassuming man, but cool and self-possessed withal. He was also an excellent shot.

Bapu, a real wild man of the woods, I picked up one day in rather a curious fashion when shooting in the Barwanee jungles of H.H. the Holkar. A true aborigine, he had literally lived all his life amongst wild beasts, and possessed the most extraordinary knowledge of their habits. As a tracker he was unequalled. It was about Christmas time in 1888 that I first met him. I was out one evening in the hills looking for sambar, when I saw in the dense jungle below me what at first appeared to be a bear.

Closer examination with my glasses, however, revealed to me a nude savage, who, armed with a rude bow some six feet long, was crawling on his hands and knees, evidently stalking a bakri—jungle sheep.

I sent my men to fetch him, and after a deal of palaver, he came dragging the little antelope which he had successfully stalked. Patting him on the shoulder, and telling him that we were brother shikaris, I induced him to accompany me to my tents where I gave him some food, and we were soon the best of friends.

Bapu subsequently became much attached to me, professing to have great faith in my prowess as a shikari. Before leaving the province I enlisted him in the Bhil Corps, which I eventually commanded, and I heard later that he had by his good conduct risen to the rank of Havildar.

Sabha first joined my service as a dog boy, but seeing his keenness for sport, I enrolled him as a shikari, much to his delight. He and Gungdya were always my greatest allies, and both afterwards accompanied me on a shooting expedition to East Africa, of which an account will be given later.

* * * * * *

While on the subject of shikaris, it will not, I trust, be considered out of place to give some description of tiger shooting and of the various methods employed for circumventing these wily animals, by no means an easy task, as every sportsman who has had any experience of this sport will readily admit.

These methods necessarily vary according to the nature of the country, the kind of jungle to be beaten, the season of the year, any known peculiarities of the particular animal being hunted, etc., etc., but the following remarks, which may be applied to panthers also, will give a general idea.

The best season for shooting tigers is during the hottest months of the year—March, April, May—when the jungles are burnt and the scarcity of water drives all game to the immediate proximity of the rivers and pools, etc.

I have always held that baiting the country, as described below, brings more game to bag than any other plan, though

it should be remembered that both tigers and panthers will often refuse to kill a tied-up bullock, especially in jungles where game such as deer or hog are anything like plentiful; but these are idiosyncrasies which have to be ignored.

The presence of a tiger having been ascertained by its fresh footprints, etc., some young buffaloes should be procured and tied up early in the afternoon at the most likely places, such as meeting of paths or ravines, and near pools of water if there happen to be any.

Towards eight or nine o'clock, when the sun is powerful, the baits should be examined, and if one has been killed, the sportsman with one or two good trackers, should quietly approach the spot and endeavour to find out where the tiger's or leopard's pugs or tracks lead to. Should they lead into a thick covert or rocks where the animal is supposed to have lain up, the ground for some distance round should be carefully examined, and, if no footprints are found leading out, men must be silently posted on trees, at twenty or thirty paces' interval, as stops to prevent the game from slipping away unobserved up one of the smaller side ravines or paths leading to the covert. This is a most necessary precaution, and the carrying out of it should therefore be personally supervised by the sportsman as on the way these stops are placed may depend the success or failure of the beat, for tigers, if not disturbed, will remain near their kill for two or three days, sometimes even longer (it all depends on the size of the animal killed), hence if well ringed round will probably be bagged. A gorged tiger is easy to beat out as he is lazy and slow in his movements.

The guns must now be placed so as to command any pass or passes leading to the cover for which the tiger is likely to make when started, and the beaters will then commence to beat the jungle at some distance from the spot where they know or believe the tiger to be lying up, for if roused suddenly it may, if not too gorged with meat, rush too quickly past the guns to allow of a sure shot.

In driving a ravine, it should be remembered that a tiger will, almost invariably, come along the bank in preference to down the bed. If during the drive any

monkeys or peacocks are heard giving their peculiar cry of alarm, it may be safely assumed that there is a tiger or panther in the beat.

Assuming that the drive has been properly managed, there should be no difficulty in bagging the tiger, for it is a large mark to fire at and will probably come along at a jog trot or slow walk. Care should however be taken not to fire at it too hurriedly and certainly not until it is well opposite the post (tree or ledge of rock) so as to make a certainty of him.

If the sportsman fires too excitedly or too soon he will probably miss or, worse still, merely wound the animal, which would then most likely break back on to the beaters, who, it must be remembered, are usually only armed with sticks, striking down any so unfortunate as to be in its way, and possibly inflicting fatal injuries. Hence in tiger hunting random shooting should never be indulged in; on the contrary, every shot fired must be well considered and intended to strike a vital spot.

Should the tiger unfortunately get away wounded, it must be followed at all costs, though not necessarily at once. And it is here that the value of an elephant comes in, for it is obviously safer for the sportsman to follow mounted on an elephant than on foot. Nevertheless, I maintain that the absence of an elephant is no excuse for abandoning the pursuit, though I have often heard it said that to follow a wounded tiger on foot is what no sane sportsman should do.

I have no wish to take up a hostile attitude in this matter, nor do I pretend to the possession of a courage greater than that required of any ordinary sportsman, but I do not consider any man should wage war with savage beasts unless he is prepared to take some sporting risks, and it is not a very sportsmanlike proceeding to leave a wounded animal in the jungle—perhaps to die a lingering death—no matter whether the beast is a tiger or a hare!

Moreover, I maintain that if proper precautions be observed, a wounded tiger may be followed up on foot without excessive risk. In the first place it should be given time to bleed to death or for its wounds to stiffen so as to render the animal less effective. Then, before advancing,

the direction the beast has taken must be definitely ascertained by examining each footprint, and looking for the faintest speck of blood on fallen leaves and bushes against which it may have brushed. Any thick cover, too, from which the animal might make a sudden onslaught should be very carefully approached, with the rifle not only at full cock, but held ready for instant use, and lastly, the sportsman should be accompanied by some men who may be relied on to stand firm; for even a wounded tiger will seldom make good its charge if boldly faced.

I would therefore impress on all young sportsmen desirous of becoming successful big-game hunters, the necessity of invariably following up and killing any animal they have wounded, not only because by doing so they put the poor beast out of pain, and incidentally secure a sporting trophy, but in addition, probably save some human lives, for wounded animals such as tigers, leopards, bears or bison are always a source of danger to any natives in the neighbourhood, who might inadvertently come upon them while seeking for cattle or firewood in the jungle in which they are lying up.

There is yet another practice to which every would-be hunter of big game should, if he wishes to succeed as such, devote his attention and study to acquire, and that is, the art of tracking. It is, doubtless, difficult to learn, but by constantly accompanying his men when scouring the jungles for game, and carefully observing various marks or indications of where an animal has been, he will in course of time be able to decipher them with ease.

He will find it very difficult at first to distinguish between the footprints of various beasts, and may find himself mistaking the track of a goat for a boar or those of a hyena for a panther, but time and experience will overcome these difficulties, and he will ultimately be surprised to find how easily he is able to discriminate between footprints much less distinguishable even than these, as, for instance, those of a tiger from a tigress, which though apparently very similar, are to the practised eye quite different, the former being much squarer, especially if the animal is old, whilst those of the tigress are more oval in shape.

And now having, to the best of my ability, endeavoured to initiate the reader into the mysteries of tiger shooting as practised in the Presidency of Bombay, I will go on to relate some of my own experiences and adventures with these animals, both during my term of office as Tiger Slayer to Government and subsequently in my ordinary official life as a District Police Officer.

To give an account of every tiger I have slain would make as tiring reading as it would be tedious to record.* I will confine myself therefore to recounting such incidents only as were specially exciting, or tend to confirm the opinion I have expressed as to the merit or defects of the various rifles I have referred to in the preceding chapter.

To begin then with an adventure I experienced while encamped at the village of Langdi Bawanee, a deserted Bhil hamlet in the Satpuda Hills.

I was out one morning looking for sambar, when we came on the fresh tracks of a tigress and two cubs, leading to a deep, rocky ravine, banked on either side by high grass and reeds. Having only a couple of men with me, I sent to the nearest village, six miles distant, for some beaters.

By the time these arrived it was nearly 5 p.m., so as there was little time to lose, I selected a tree, at the lower end of the covert, and, mounting into it, told the beaters to drive the tigress towards me.

As the men came along the tigress showed herself for an instant, and then retiring under a mass of green foliage, lay perfectly still.

Making a signal to the beaters with my hand, indicating the position which the tigress had taken up, I waited patiently. Presently one of the men, neglecting my express instructions to keep well together, approached the spot alone from above and throwing a stone into the foliage was promptly charged by the tigress.

He ran for some trees, where his comrades had taken refuge on hearing the tigress roar, closely followed by the infuriated beast. Two more strides and she would have

* Mr. Digby Davies has shot to his own rifle over 250 tigers and has assisted at the destruction of many others.

caught him up, but at this moment he had fortunately reached the tree, and seizing a branch, swung himself up. The tigress, however, by getting a momentary hold for her claws on the trunk, seized him by the leg, inflicting two deep wounds, but luckily the man held on, for had he loosed his grip nothing could have saved him.

I had a perfect view of these proceedings from my tree, but the distance—about ninety yards—was too great for accurate shooting, and by the time I had climbed down and reached the spot, the tigress had gone back into the cover whence she had charged.

We bandaged up the man, and making a litter of boughs, sent him off to camp. Meanwhile, the tigress could be heard growling savagely in the covert, and thinking she would probably repeat her tactics, and so give me a shot, I quietly mounted the tree on which the man had been, while the Bhils bombarded her with stones, but failed to make her move.

There was nothing for it now but to walk her up, in other words, to attack her in her stronghold, so, collecting a few likely looking men, we approached the spot, but had not gone very far, when out she rushed with a loud roar, and before I had time to fire had gained the shelter of an overhanging ledge of rock, disappearing into some dense jungle below, where I had to leave her for the night.

CHAPTER VI

Resume the attack—A bait taken—The tigress charges—A difficult shot—Hit—Wounded mortally, yet attacks a beater—I go to the rescue—A fortunate escape—Tigers not incapable of climbing trees—The wounded man recovers—Wounds from tiger's teeth and claws—The character of tigers described—Man-eaters—Causes that produce them—Fallacies regarding man-eaters—News of another tiger—Posted on foot—Killed with a single bullet—Tenacity of life fortunately rare—A dangerous sport—A tigress with cubs—One bagged—An unexpected attack—Fire both barrels into her face—The tigress gets home—I am knocked over—A period of unconsciousness—Badly clawed and bitten—Saved by Bapu's pluck—Bandaging the wound—Carried into camp—Treatment and eventual recovery—The dangers of a light rifle—Heavy casualty list in Khandesh—Another instance of light rifle inefficiency—Monkeys give the alarm—Sudden appearance of the tiger—An unfortunate slip—Reserving my fire—A terrified dog-boy—Tiger sits up dog-fashion—A perilous situation—The tiger fortunately retires—Send for heavy rifle—Tracking up the tiger—Success at last—A fine trophy.

THE next day, accompanied by Major M——, I.M.S., Surgeon to H.E. the then Governor of Bombay, who had come out to me for a few days' shooting, I returned to the jungle, where we found fresh tracks of the tigress in the same covert. She had, during the night, killed one of the buffaloes I had tied up as bait.

As my friend had never shot a tiger, I placed him in the best position, and taking up a post some distance behind him, told the men to beat the jungle up towards us.

At the first sound of the beaters the tigress showed herself, and growling savagely the while, charged past M——'s tree. It was a difficult mark she offered, for besides the pace she was going, some clumps of bamboos intervened, but he hit her with his first barrel, the bullet striking her about the middle of the ribs, passing, as we found later, diagonally through the opposite shoulder.

The wound was a mortal one, but she managed to gallop on some forty yards, then, attempting to rush up the bank, was challenged by one of the " stops," whom she instantly charged, actually scrambling up the tree for some distance in her efforts to get at him.*

Hearing the shouts of the men, mingled with the savage roaring of the animal, I thought some one had been seized by her, and running up to the spot, was just in time to finish her off, much to the relief of the hapless Bhil who, however, beyond the fright he had suffered, was happily none the worse for his adventure. We subsequently measured the tigress' highest claw-marks on the tree, which, so far as I remember, was some twelve feet from the ground; thus proving that she had actually climbed up to that height, which, seeing that the tree was bare of branches to a point above the spot she had reached, was not a bad performance. It would seem, then, that tigers are not, as is generally supposed, physically incapable of climbing trees, indeed, to this particular animal, it seemed to come quite naturally, for both on this occasion and before, she had done so evidently without effort.

The man she had mauled the day before remained with us for some weeks, and, thanks to my medical friend's skilled treatment, eventually recovered from his wounds, fortunately for him blood poisoning had not set in, for this condition often follows on wounds from a tiger's teeth or claws, and almost invariably if the animal happens to have been recently feeding on an old and decomposed kill; at the same time he was unfortunate, in that the tigress happened to have cubs, for otherwise it is improbable that she would have made this furious and practically unprovoked, attack on him.

Tigers, in common with wild animals generally, differ considerably in character, some being savage and morose, others shy and retiring; but as a general rule, tigers, unless confirmed man-eaters, will not attack a human being without some provocation, though those which eventually take to man-eating, frequently attack their victims

* There are other instances on record where a tiger, shot through the heart or brain has been known to travel several yards.

boldly, first creeping up to them with a rapid, stealthy movement.

These pests of the jungle, happily now rare, are usually old tigers and invariably ex-cattle lifters who, having frequented the neighbourhood of villages and become accustomed to the presence of men, begin by carrying off some wretched unsuspecting cowherd or wood-cutter, and having thus discovered that killing human beings is easier work than cattle or game, take to man eating as a source of subsistence.

It is an error to suppose, by the way, that man-eaters are invariably mangy or lean, for, on the contrary, they are usually in prime condition, with bright and glossy coats, excellent as trophies. Unfortunately, however, the rapidity and uncertainty of a man-eater's movements always make it difficult to bring one to bag.

* * * * * *

Towards the end of April, '88, I was encamped at Mitagaon on the borders of the Barwanee territory. This place, owing to innumerable deep and tortuous ravines, filled with long grass and thorny bushes, was notorious for the number of tigers in its vicinity, and in one year I had killed thirty-one to my own rifle, and helped to slay several more.

The day after my arrival at the camp, khabbar * was brought to me of a tiger having killed a buffalo a short distance off. I started immediately for the spot, and taking up the tracks, marked the beast down in a small nullah. I sent in the beaters, and, there being no suitable tree available, had to await the drive on foot.

The shouts of the beaters soon disclosed the fact that the animal was started, and presently a very large tiger emerged from the cover, and leisurely walked past me, about fifteen yards away, thus presenting a large and easy target which I could scarcely fail to hit. I fired at once with my ·500 Express, rolling him over like a rabbit, the bullet of pure lead having entered close behind the shoulder and smashed the heart to pieces.

Here was thus an instance of a tiger being killed by a single bullet, and yet, only two days later, with this my

* News.

rifle, I shot a tigress through the brain, but she held on, and with undiminished speed, for fully thirty yards before she fell!

This—with the case described in the earlier pages of this chapter—shows how tenaciously at times the larger beasts of prey will cling to life, thus rendering their pursuit so dangerous to the sportsman when on foot. Such tenacity to life, however, is fortunately rare, for, as a general rule, a shot if well placed will, even if not instantly fatal, at any rate put the animal out of action. Nevertheless, accidents in tiger shooting, as with polo or any other dangerous form of sport, must occasionally occur, and sometimes most unexpectedly as the following incident will show.

I was once encamped at Pansunba—also in the Barwanee territory—when my men who had been out as usual looking for tracks, reported the presence of a tigress and two cubs in a broad, sandy ravine not very far off. On my arrival there I found the ravine in question ran between two sloping banks, both covered with high grass and reeds.

Placing some men on trees to drive the tigress back, should she attempt to break up either side, I took my post on a tree at the furthest end of the cover. Knowing the danger they ran in beating up a tigress with cubs, I cautioned the beaters to keep well together and distributed amongst them some spare guns which I had loaded with buck shot.

I had scarcely taken up my position when I heard loud shouts, followed by a succession of savage roarings from the tigress. Presently one of the stops at the upper end of the covert signalled that the tigress had broken back and gone up the bank; however, the beaters still came on, driving before them a three-quarter grown cub which I promptly rolled over.

I then left my tree, and accompanied by my two trusty shikaris, Bapu and Etoo, proceeded in the direction the tigress had gone, with the intention of taking up her tracks and marking her down again if possible.

Guided by the men on trees, we cautiously approached the spot where she was last seen and were carefully

examining the ground, when we were startled by a deafening roar, instantly followed by the tigress who came charging down the bank, and at such speed that her belly almost touched the ground.

Stepping forward, clear of some bushes, I had barely time to aim, but succeeded in getting off both barrels of my rifle right into her face, which then was hardly three paces from me. However, she managed to get home, and the next moment I was on my back with the tigress standing over me growling savagely.

I remembered nothing more, but on coming to found myself surrounded by Bhils and my late antagonist lying dead at my feet—a fine, heavy beast with a rich dark skin. I now learnt that on the tigress seizing me, Bapu had most pluckily run in and shot her through the head, all this having been the work of a few seconds.

My chest and arms were badly clawed and bitten, but the wounds were not so serious as they might have been, thanks to the crippled condition of the tigress, whose lower jaw had been literally blown to pieces by my shots, and to the cool and plucky Bapu, who with great presence of mind had shot her before she could do me further mischief.

The men now bandaged me up with strips torn off their clothing, and making a litter of boughs, carried me back to camp, distant some eight miles, where I had my wounds attended to by the native apothecary in charge of the Pansembal Dispensary. Eventually, under the skilful treatment of Colonel B——, Civil Surgeon of Dhulia, I recovered entirely from my wounds.

The rifle I had been using was a ·450 Express, carrying a light hollow bullet, lent me by my poor friend G—— of the Forest Department, who was afterwards killed by a tiger. This bullet being so hollow had completely broken up. Had I had my Rigby, which was unfortunately in the hands of the gun-maker at the time, I am confident its long heavy bullet would have stopped the tigress, possibly killed her instantaneously, as on examining the skull, I found both my shots had struck her fairly between the nostrils, from which there is a clear passage to the brain.

However, I was glad enough to have got off so cheaply as I had, for the death-roll of sportsmen killed by tigers in Khandesh was very heavy about this time, amongst them H—— of the Civil Service, K——, Royal Army Medical Corps, and others whose names I have forgotten, besides G——, already mentioned, who, like myself, had been only slightly mauled, but blood poisoning setting in, had died within a week. A fine sportsman he was, too, and a great loss to the district.

Another instance of a light bullet from a small bore failing to inflict a fatal wound, was on one occasion when I was shooting in the Satpuda range of hills. I had strolled out one evening, accompanied by my dog-boy—a lad of about ten years of age—to look for chinkara, or ravine deer, in some scrub jungle near my camp. Not expecting to meet with any big game, I had taken only my single ·400 Express and half a dozen cartridges.

A short distance from the tents was a deep, rocky ravine, choked with dense bushes and masses of creeping plants. As we were skirting round this, we suddenly heard some monkeys at the extreme end of the covert uttering their harsh, peculiar cry of alarm, and thinking they had probably seen a panther, we cautiously approached the spot, keeping a sharp look out.

Crawling on hands and knees, we had almost reached the end of the ravine, and I was searching the ground for tracks, when the boy, catching me by the arm, pointed to some rocks above us. At the same moment I saw a large tiger picking his way leisurely among the boulders, about twenty yards to my front, and evidently quite unconscious of our presence.

I fired at once, striking him in the ribs. Unfortunately, my foot slipping at the moment on some stones prevented my swinging the rifle as far forward as I had intended, with the result that the bullet struck the animal a little too far back.

Quickly pushing in another cartridge, I fired again, smashing his forearm.

This brought him rolling down the slope to within ten yards of where we stood, but I now reserved my fire, for when we first saw the tiger I had only three cartridges left,

having fired the rest at some chinkara which we had come upon before.

Meanwhile, my small dog-boy, terrified out of his young senses, had closed up to me for protection, and no wonder, considering his years, for the tiger was now growling savagely and biting his injured leg in impotent rage, as wounded tigers often do.

Presently, he sat up on his haunches, like a huge dog, and looking in our direction, I knew at once that he had seen us. Drawing himself back, with body arched, ears laid flat, lips drawn up, exposing his long white fangs, and eyes flashing fire, he fixed his gaze upon us. This was certainly one of the most perilous situations I have been in, for truly the beast was an awe-inspiring spectacle, and I felt my heart beating considerably quicker than its wont, as I thought of the light rifle in my hands, and how ineffective it had shown itself to be.

Still I reserved my fire, expecting every moment that the beast would charge when I intended to blaze into his face, and trust to luck, but presently, and to my intense relief, he stood up, and then, slowly retracing his steps over the rocks, disappeared from view.

I now sent off the boy to camp to fetch my heavy rifle, and as many men as he could collect. By the time they arrived the sun had almost set, nevertheless, we took up the blood tracks into some high grass where one of the men who had climbed on to a tree called out that he could see the tiger.

Handing the man my rifle, I climbed up too into the tree, and soon made out the beast in a crouching position and facing in my direction. Taking a steady aim, I fired and shot him through the neck.

He was a large heavy tiger, measuring nine feet five inches as he lay. My first bullet had struck him in the ribs but being light and expanding, had merely inflicted a surface wound. My second had shattered his forearm, but this would not have prevented him from charging home had I not finished him with the heavy rifle.

CHAPTER VII

A rare chance—A bull bison and a tiger—Hopes of a record—"Right and left"—Beating on spec—The bull bison viewed—Changing my rifle—About to pull the trigger—The tiger appears on the scene—An unparalleled situation—A chance of making history—Another change of rifles—Fatal hesitation—The tiger alarmed—Making off at a gallop—A difficult shot—The record unachieved—The tigress shot—The light rifle scores for once—Another tiger killed—Evidence in favour of the heavier weapon—Experience gained as tiger slayer—Some remarks on tigers—Varieties of the species—Hot and cold weather coats—Colour a sign of age—Muscular development—"Lucky bones"—Cattle-killing and hill tigers—Difference in weight and size—Length of tigers—Methods of measurement—Age difficult to determine—How a tiger kills its prey—Manner of eating—Not necessarily nocturnal in its habits—An example—The tiger's attack—Wounds generally fatal—Time of breeding—Number of cubs produced—Devouring their young—Feeding the cubs—Cubs as pets—Tiger fat and rheumatism—Milk of tigress as medicine—Adventures of a sample—Legends and superstitions—A curiosity in tigers—Declared a new species—The mystery solved—Disillusion.

IT was seldom, even in the India of thirty years ago—a period when its jungles were swarming with big game—that a sportsman had the luck to find himself simultaneously confronted with two such noble quarry as a bull bison and a tiger! Yet such was the rare, though somewhat embarrassing, situation I was placed in one evening when out shooting near my camp.

I was returning home after a fruitless search for bison accompanied by my henchman Bapu, when we came across his co-tracker Etoo, and the remainder of the men, who had been in a different direction, also looking for tracks. They informed us that they had come on the fresh pugs * of a tiger early in the morning and had followed them to the edge of a hill where, the ground being hard and stony, they had lost them.

* Footprints.

As this hill was but a short distance up and there was yet sufficient light, I decided to beat it on spec. We accordingly made for the spot where, taking up my position near a tree with Bapu beside me, I told the rest to go round and work over the hill towards us. Parallel to, and at the foot of the hill, was a dry water-course, the far side of which was covered with dense reed and bushes.

I had my ·500 Express as well as a 10-bore rifle, which Bapu was carrying, the latter being intended for the bison I had hitherto failed to find.

Scarcely had the men reached the top of the hill, which was studded with teak trees and bush, when I saw a splendid bull bison emerge from the reeds, and come walking along the water-course directly for our tree, which he passed to the left, about five paces' distant.

Quickly exchanging the Express for the 10-bore, I had covered his massive shoulder, and was about to press the trigger, when Bapu suddenly drew my attention to a huge tiger which was trotting down the hill immediately opposite us!

The position was now a difficult and most perplexing one, for here was I with a bull bison to my left and a tiger to my right, free to shoot at either, perhaps at both, and thus, with luck, create perhaps a record "right and left"!

It was an achievement by no means impossible, but unfortunately not destined to come off. Deciding to take the tiger, I foolishly changed rifles again, and quietly as this was done, the movement was sufficient to betray us. The tiger, now only some twelve yards off, detected us at once, and swerving abruptly to the left, went lumbering down the hill.

He passed me at a fast gallop. I managed, however, to hit him, and on receiving the shot, he lurched heavily forward but held on, and entering a thick bamboo jungle bordering the hill, was soon lost to view.

As it was too late now to follow him, we postponed the pursuit to the next morning, when we took up his tracks. We found a few drops of blood at first, but after a time these ceased to show, and though we followed up the pugs for a

considerable distance, we were finally obliged to abandon the search.

Probably the tiger had merely received a flesh wound from which, as I did not get him, I hoped he would eventually recover, and that we might meet again some day!

The bison, no doubt, had made off earlier in the proceedings—at any rate, I have no recollection of having seen him after transferring my attention to the tiger.

Thus ended an incident which, had fortune favoured me, might have proved better worth recording, but though I failed to achieve what would, probably, have been a record " right and left," yet the situation in itself was so unique that I make no apology for describing it.

* * * * *

When out shooting on one occasion with B—— of the police in the Ghorisgaon jungles (Khandesh), we had wounded a tigress and followed her up into some very thick jungle. So dense was the cover that we had to hack our way to where the tigress lay. Suddenly we came upon her, crouching within five paces of us, and opening fire at once, rolled her over dead.

Fortunately she did not charge, or she would certainly have left her mark on one, or both, of us. It was a broken hip, no doubt, that prevented her from doing so, for at such extremely close quarters, it is seldom that a wounded tiger fails to take the offensive. She was a fine beast, measuring eight feet six inches, and it was with some difficulty that we dragged the carcase out of the dense cover.

On another occasion I was beating for bakri * in a strip of jungle, when suddenly a fine tiger put in his appearance. I was on foot and armed with a light, single-barrelled rifle, but the chance was too good a one to lose. The tiger was standing facing me about fifteen yards off, so taking a steady aim between the eyes, I fired, and lurching heavily forward, he fell stone dead.

Hearing the shot the beaters came running up, expecting to find I had " bagged " the bakri, and were consequently

* Jungle sheep.

much amazed to see me standing over a tiger instead—and a fine one at that, the animal measuring nine feet eight inches.

On walking through the covert later, we found he had killed one of the beasts I had been looking for, and had eaten the greater portion.

The above was seemingly a distinct score for the advocates of light rifles taking a hollow bullet, but in point of fact this incident was no proof of its efficiency, for had there been tough twigs, or even reeds, intervening between the tiger and myself, the light bullet would probably have been deflected, whereas with a heavier projectile such obstruction would not necessarily have affected its course.

As an example of this I may quote the following incident.

I was once following up a wounded tiger, when we suddenly came upon him, crouching behind a clump of bamboos, the tough stems of which partly protected his head and shoulders. In these circumstances to fire at the beast, with any certainty of killing him at once, was extremely problematical.

However, there was no time to wait for a more favourable opportunity, as from the quick, twitching movement of the tail, I could tell that the tiger was on the point of charging, so, aiming at as much of the head as I could see, I fired, killing him almost instantaneously.

Subsequent examination showed that the heavy, solid bullet, driven by six drams of powder, crashing through numerous obstructing twigs, had struck him half-way between the nostrils and the eyes. Had it been a lighter, hollow bullet, it would either have been deflected by the twigs, or broken up completely.

I hardly deserved this tiger, however, for I had missed him badly the day before, though this was possibly due to my being somewhat shaky at the time from repeated attacks of fever, and, moreover, had not quite recovered from the mauling I had received, as described in a previous chapter. In a second beat, however, I had managed to hit him in the ribs, but too far back, and it was only after weary miles of tracking with my men, that we had finally come on to him.

This incident brings me to the end of my list of exciting or out-of-the-way adventures experienced with tigers in Khandesh, for though I shot many more of these animals while employed in that district, none of them, so far as I remember, gave me any trouble to secure, nor was the pursuit of them attended by any circumstances of sufficient interest to relate.

During my long term of office there as tiger slayer, however, I had, as I have already observed, quite exceptional opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of the habits, etc., of these animals, not only by personal observation, but by talking to and questioning the Bhils, than whom, as a people, there are none better informed on this subject.

As much of this information thus acquired would possibly be of interest, and certainly of some value, to any sportsman who may be contemplating a shooting trip to India, I will, before closing this chapter, give a brief résumé from notes I made from time to time.

To begin with, there is, as, I believe, universally acknowledged, but one species of tiger, though varying a good deal in size and colour, those found in Northern China and Korea or Manchuria, for example, being said to be larger, and have certainly thicker coats than those of India, nature's provision, no doubt, for the colder climate they inhabit, for tigers killed during the cold weather in India, too, have a much richer coat, the fur being closer and longer than of those shot in the hot weather.

Tigers in India become lighter in colour from age, the stripes becoming narrower, fainter, and further apart as their age increases.

The muscular development of a tiger is enormous, and there are two curiously bent bones, about four inches long, disconnected with any other bones, embedded in the flesh and muscle of either shoulder, that give extra strength and cohesion to the parts. These clavicle bones—called by Europeans "lucky bones"—are much prized by the natives as charms.

The weight of a tiger is between four and five hundred pounds, but varies considerably according to the locality

A NOBLE TROPHY.

BULL BUFFALO. [*To face p.* 48.

(Central Provinces.)

in which they are found. The cattle-lifter or cattle-killing tiger is usually heavier and in better condition, subsisting as it does chiefly on cattle, than the game-killing or hill tiger, which lives principally on game, and is usually a lighter and more active beast because of it having to travel longer distances for its food. I have, however, killed very large hill tigers in jungles where such game as wild pig or sambar were plentiful.

The length of a tiger depends greatly on the manner in which it is measured, for a skin can be stretched to almost any length. Of the numerous number of tigers I have shot, none exceeded ten feet two inches, and I can only remember one of that length, shot in the Central Provinces, the average length being nine feet six inches. In measuring a tiger, care should be taken that the measurement is in a straight line from nose to tip of tail and *not* round the curves as measurements are taken in Bengal.

The average age to which a tiger lives is, I believe, twenty years. It is always difficult to tell the age except by the size, faintness of the stripes, and the discoloured appearance of the teeth or fangs.

In killing cattle or game, the tiger invariably fixes its claws and teeth into the flesh to obtain the necessary purchase, then seizing the throat in his jaw from underneath, gives the fatal wrench which dislocates the neck, bearing down its victim by sheer weight. Human beings are invariably seized by the head or neck.

In eating its prey the tiger always commences at the hindquarters. The exact spot where the first mouthful will be taken can be told with certainty. After and during the meal the tiger drinks largely.

Tigers are not necessarily nocturnal in their habits. They hunt by day as well as by night. I recall on one occasion tying up a young buffalo, as bait for a tiger early in the afternoon. Shortly after we had left the spot, we were startled by a roar and on returning found the tiger had already killed the buffalo and dragged it into a nullah close by! Strangely enough, we did not get that tiger, though we beat for him twice!

The attack of a tiger is terrific, as may be imagined from an animal of such vast muscular proportions, one of

the most powerful elements in the attack being the startling, coughing roar with which it is invariably accompanied, a sound so intense in volume and ferocity as to be almost paralyzing to the coolest, and once heard can never be forgotten or mistaken for any other sound.

Wounds from a tiger's teeth or claws are very often fatal, blood poisoning usually setting in, besides the shock to the system which is naturally very great. Tigers do not breed at any fixed seasons. I have taken cubs in April and October—on two occasions four at a litter, but this is unusual, three being the more common number, and occasionally two. The cubs, as with pups and kittens, are born blind.

Tigers not infrequently devour their young, hence it is seldom that a tigress with young cubs will be found in the same jungle with her mate. A tigress remains with her cubs till they are almost full grown and able to take care of themselves. While under her charge she is most assiduous in teaching them to kill. When very young she feeds them with gobbets of half-digested flesh which she disgorges on her return from hunting. I was once an eye-witness to this interesting performance while watching, unperceived, a tigress with her cubs.

Tiger cubs make charming pets if taken young. I have reared several, but have never kept them for any length of time. They thrive best on raw meat. The fat of a tiger is considered by the natives a valuable cure for rheumatism, as also is milk taken from a tigress.

I remember one occasion, while following the tracks of a bison, coming upon the deserted lair of a tigress, where amongst other evidence of her recent occupation, the Bhils discovered some white, chalky-looking substance. They collected this with delight, exclaiming that it was tiger's milk and would command a good price in the market as medicine.

It seems that the tigress had apparently been deserted by her cubs, and the overflow of milk had solidified. I kept a small portion, which I sent to the Chemical Analyser to the Government of Bombay with a view to its being examined, but received no reply.

Years afterwards, happening to meet this official, I

discovered that the match-box containing this curious substance had not been opened, as it was believed to be one of the many hoaxes to which his particular department often fell a victim. He much regretted, however, having missed the opportunity of examining such a phenomenal specimen!

There are many other theories as to the traits or habits of the tiger, which though doubtless founded on experience as long, or even longer than my own, I have not quoted, as they do not happen to have come under my personal notice. One such hypothesis, for example, is that a tiger and tigress will sometimes hunt together, the one taking up a position while the other drives the game towards it.* Another, that if a kill is handled by any human being, the tiger will not return to it; or again—though this is more probably a native superstition—that if the animal killed by a tiger should happen to fall with its head pointing to the west, the tiger will abandon it, or at any rate will not return!

Before concluding these remarks on tigers and their ways, I am tempted to quote a curious incident which, while it has no reference to the habits of these animals, yet proves how easily even sportsmen of experience may sometimes be deceived and led to imagine, from the seemingly good evidence before them, that they have discovered a new species. Here is the story as told to me by one who had read it in an old Indian sporting magazine.

Many years ago a party of sportsmen in Bengal had shot a tiger, and on examining it later found it had ears like those of a crop-eared fox-terrier and a tail but a few inches in length.

After careful consideration, they solemnly pronounced the beast to be a hitherto undiscovered species of the tiger, and reported their discovery in the magazine above quoted, and after some controversial correspondence on the subject, the strange animal was finally accepted as a new species.

Meanwhile, a sportsman of an adjacent district, who happened to have been on leave in England at the time, returned to India, and coming across the magazine, was

* For a verification of this see the author's last work, "Tigerland," p. 151.

much interested to find that a new kind of tiger had been discovered.

Suddenly, however, he remembered that some years prior to the date on which this tiger had been shot, he and a friend had captured a small cub, and one day, while cutting the ears and tails of some terrier pups, had, on the impulse of the moment, performed a similar operation on the cub, which some months later had escaped and was lost in an adjoining jungle!

CHAPTER VIII

Tiger slayer and policeman—A useful combination—Tracking a Dacoit leader—A troublesome gang—Eluding the police—In pursuit—My early morning visitor—A nude, wild figure—An unexpected meeting—A conditional surrender suggested—Offer of a drink—Sampling the brandy—Arrested in the act—Camp life in India—Tents—Council round the camp fire—Useful information thus acquired—A day in camp described—Fascination of the life—Camping near jungles—Noises in the night as music to the sportsman—Possibilities of adventure, an example—A dinner interrupted—Face to face with a leopard—Dangerous curiosity—Another camp adventure—A shooting camp disturbed—Besieged by a wild elephant—Its threatening attitude—A thrilling moment—Suspense relieved—A well-considered shot—Comical conclusion—A Christmas camp—Some bears marked down—The beat begun—A frock-coated sportsman—Charged by a bear—His headlong flight—Coat-tails flying—Caught in a creeper—A Scotch doctor to the rescue—A lucky fluke—"Get up, mon, I've shot the bar"—Proud of his success—His boast.

As Tiger Slayer to the Government in Khandesh, much of my time was necessarily devoted to the destruction of these animals, for to be successful in this work required a great deal of personal attention to preliminary details. Thanks, however, to the efficiency of the inestimable Bapu and his colleagues, this labour was considerably lessened, enabling me to give the attention necessary for the performance of my other duties as police-officer of the district.

In point of fact, however, I found that much of what I learnt while tiger-hunting, was of equal use to me as Superintendent of Police, for to carry out efficiently the duties of either office it was essentially necessary to mix freely with the people and to elicit from them the information I required in both cases.

Thus, while ostensibly and actually inquiring as to the whereabouts of a tiger, I was often able to pick up useful information regarding the people of the village I happened

to be in, as for instance, any persons whom I had reason for supposing were secretly engaged in criminal pursuits.

In this way I picked up on one occasion some valuable information about a Bhil named Lal-Sing, who subsequently developed into a somewhat famous leader of Dacoits, and whose arrest was eventually accomplished in the following curious fashion.

We had been troubled for some time by a gang of Dacoits supposed to be under the leadership of this man, who was a deserter from the Mawas, or Irregular Police. They had committed several murders, held up villages, stopped travellers on the roads, etc., etc., and when finally pressed by our special parties, the leader took refuge in the hills where it was impossible to locate him, though he was seen once or twice and fired at, but escaped.

At length one night, while still engaged in the pursuit, I was asleep in a bungalow at Palasnair, a village at the foot of the hills, when I was awoke by a feeling as of some one near me, and in the dim morning light I saw a nude, wild figure, armed with a bow and arrows. I asked him what he wanted, awaiting his answer with some interest, for I had by then recognized my visitor as being no less important an individual than the famous Dacoit leader, Lal-Sing himself, the very person I was in pursuit of!

He said "he had come to give himself up on condition that he was forgiven, and that I would keep him myself," by which, I presume, he meant that I would not give him up to justice. He added "that he would return for my answer, but that he must now rejoin his comrades, who were awaiting him in a village some two miles off."

I replied "that I was delighted to see him," which was true enough; then, knowing a Bhil's weakness for alcoholic liquids, suggested he should have a drink before he went, and producing a full bottle of brandy, handed it to him, after knocking off the top. While he was testing its contents, swallowing the major portion in the process, I stole out, and calling to the sentry—who, by the way, I found asleep—we captured the sporting reprobate, who was eventually sent up and tried, and being convicted, was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

* * * * *

CAMP LIFE IN INDIA

One of the pleasantest periods in the life of an Indian Police Officer is that portion of it which, under the regulations, he is required to spend in touring through his district on inspection duty. This cold-weather tour, as it is termed officially, usually begins about the 15th November and is continued, with short intervals at headquarters, till the end of March.

During these four months the climate of India is at its very best, and is probably, at this season, the finest in the world, with day after day of brilliant sunshine, tempered by cool breezes, and the nights so cold and often frosty, that a fire is by no means a mere luxury, especially out in camp, where, apart from the comfort it imparts, it serves to light up the surroundings as well as to purify the air which, after sunset, in the neighbourhood of jungles, is apt to be malarious.

Camp life in India has often been described and, as it deserves to be, generally in glowing terms, since it would be difficult to imagine a condition of life more thoroughly enjoyable, for it must not be supposed that camping in India, in the sense referred to here, involves any of the hardships or discomforts such as one experiences in that questionable amusement known as "camping out," which some people, gifted with more energy than discretion, occasionally indulge in in England.

On the contrary, for, in the first place, every official, whose duties include an annual tour of his district, is provided by Government with large, roomy tents, usually sufficient in number to allow of one being always sent on ahead, to be pitched on the new camping ground. Thus when marching from one encampment to another—usually done in the early morning—the official finds a comfortable shelter awaiting him, as well as breakfast, for the cook, with his appliances, has come on during the night.

The other tents and equipage, transported on many bullock carts, arrive some hours later, and before the night sets in, the tents are re-erected, their furniture arranged and the carts being paid up and discharged, the encampment is, to all appearances, as it was the day before the move was made.

Then, as the sun goes down, and the brief Indian

twilight is merging into darkness, comes a period of blissful inactivity passed lounging in a hammock-chair by the camp fire, discussing sport with the shikaris, may be, or in extracting information from the head men of the villages in the neighbourhood of the camp.

Much useful information, whether concerning sport or crime, can be picked up in this way, for while voluble enough when talked to in this unofficial manner, natives are singularly reticent if they suspect they are being questioned for some specific purpose. Thus, at these camp-fire councils, the official not only picks up information which he could not otherwise obtain, but, what is as important, gains the confidence of the people, which once secured, is a valuable asset in all dealings with orientals, and one not easy to acquire by Europeans.

But to continue. The most important function of the day is dinner, which served in the cosy comfort of a warm, well-lighted tent, has little in it to suggest the primitive kitchen whence it issued, for though cooked in the open, and on a range, ingeniously constructed out of clay, in the number and quality of the courses, it differs in no way from an ordinary meal.

Nor in such matters as table linen, glass or plate, is any difference to be seen, and even the furniture, though obviously of a kind made to take to pieces or roll up, is solid in appearance and comfortable in use. In fact, except for its poles and canvas walls, there is nothing much in the interior of the tent to distinguish it from that of an ordinary, plainly furnished room.

In addition to this, the day or " dining " tent, which, by the way, is usually sent on the night before the camp is moved, there is the sleeping tent, a counterpart of the other, and being as comfortably furnished, makes as cosy a bedroom as any one could wish for.

The general pattern of these tents is what is termed a Swiss cottage, varying in size from twelve to fourteen feet square, with two poles, connected by a transverse bar, or ridge pole, and having a verandah at either end, the one at the back being enclosed to form a bathroom.

There are two openings, or doors, in front, one on each

side of the pole, fitted with chicks,* which can be let down during the day to keep out the glare, and heavy curtains stiffened with lathes, for use at night, and as these are made large enough to overlap the openings, they keep the tent quite warm.

In fact, as a place to sleep in, it would be difficult to find anything so snug and comfortable as these tents, and there is a fascination about this life too, for when, as often happens, the camp is pitched near a jungle, strange, awe-inspiring sounds are sometimes heard during the night, as, for instance, of a tiger calling to its mate, or the weird, rasping cry of a leopard on the prowl.

These animals are probably some little distance from the camp, but in the stillness of the night, their cries sound as if the beasts were prowling round the tent. The situation, therefore, is, to say the least of it, sufficiently exciting for the occupant, and if he is a sportsman, most fascinating too, for to him there is no music more entrancing than the call of a tiger or leopard in the night.

But it must not be supposed that such experiences are common, for even when encamped in the midst of a dense forest, night after night may pass without a sound to indicate the presence of any animal within it, still, as few Indian forests are untenanted, there is always the possibility of this silence being suddenly dispelled by a tiger's awe-inspiring roar, or by the cry of some other beast as interesting from a sportsman's point of view.

As an example of how unexpectedly one may be confronted with wild animals, when encamped in the vicinity of a jungle, I may quote two incidents, both of which occurred to a friend of mine, a police officer in Bengal.

On the first occasion, he and the district magistrate, while camping together in one of the wildest portions of their district, were seated one moonlight night at dinner, when suddenly there arose a loud, sharp, rasping cry, which, continuing for some seconds, seemed to come from just outside the tent. My friend, being the keener sportsman of the two, rushed out at once to find himself face to face with a huge leopard, which, evidently attracted by a dog inside the tent, was standing a few paces from the

* A curtain made of thin bamboo strips strung closely together.

door. Fortunately, however, it made no attempt to attack him, but turning quickly round, sneaked off into the jungle whence it came. It was a lucky escape, for in his eagerness to catch the beast in the act of uttering its curious, weird cry, my friend had run out unarmed.

His next adventure, experienced a year or so later, was even more exciting, and might well have ended in disaster, if not to himself, to one or more of the twenty odd persons present at the time.

On this occasion the scene of the adventure was a shooting camp, pitched on the borders of a large Government Reserve Forest, and the time, as before, while my friend and his guests were at dinner.

The meal had just been served in the brilliantly lit-up dining tent, when, suddenly, there was a tremendous uproar in the camp, servants and camp followers all shouting together, but producing no intelligible sounds, except for the two words "Jungli Hati—Jungli Hati" * which, repeated frequently, could be heard above the din.

In a moment the dining tent was emptied of all but the two lady guests, the rest rushing out with one accord, most of them wondering, for the moment, what had happened, for amongst them were some to whom the two Hindustani words conveyed no information.

My friend ran out with the others, but, mindful possibly of his former indiscretion, called for his rifle, which with some cartridges were quickly brought to him by one of the Khit-magar † in attendance. Loading the weapon, he followed the others to where the shouting crowd of natives were assembled.

There, standing about thirty paces from this crowd, and in the very centre of the camp, consisting of some half a dozen larger and several smaller tents, was a huge tusker elephant, coated from head to foot with mud from a pool in which it had evidently been wallowing.

Whether frightened at the shouting, or merely confused for the time, it stood perfectly still, its only movements being a forward and backward motion of its huge ears

* Wild elephant. † Table servant.

and an occasional swaying of the trunk. But in these seemingly harmless movements there was danger, as the more experienced of those present knew, for such action in an elephant often precedes an attack. At the same time there was nothing to be done, for to fire at the animal then would in all probability have precipitated the attack.

Fortunately, however, the beast was not, apparently, in a pugnacious mood just then, for after a minute or two, which to the helpless crowd awaiting its decision, must have seemed the longest in their lives, it turned slowly round, and picking its steps carefully through the tents' ropes, strode majestically away.

But the danger was not over yet, for presently it stopped, and with its body half turned towards the camp, was standing in a thoughtful attitude as if meditating whether it would not be better to advance again, when my friend, thinking rightly that at this critical moment a sudden shock might change the current of its thoughts, fired both barrels into its stern.

The effect was instantaneous. With a squeal of pain, rage, or fear—possibly all three—the huge animal scuttled off as fast as it could go, seeming quite ridiculous in the anxiety it exhibited to be off, and thus bringing to a comical conclusion what had come perilously near to being a very serious tragedy, for there was no limit to the damage it might have done had it charged into the crowd.

With the possibility of experiencing adventures such as these, always present, added to the free, healthy life he leads during this period, it is no wonder that the official Anglo-Indian should look forward to the camping season, for after the long weary months of heat and toil, it comes as an oasis, so to speak, in the desert of his late existence.

Moreover, as already mentioned in a previous chapter, it is during these cold-weather tours—generally at Christmas time—that shooting parties are made up, when, by previous arrangement, the various officials of the district meet and camp together for a week or more, each carrying on his own duties, but devoting his leisure hours to sport. On these occasions it is usual to have a general mess, one large tent being set apart for this purpose, in which, after the

day's work or sport, dinner, the most enjoyable social function of the day, is served, followed by hot grog, while seated round the camp fire, when every animal bagged that day is shot over again, and many a story told—some perhaps not unlike "travellers' tales" though probably quite true, for incidents in Indian sport are often quite as strange as fiction.

It was at one of these camp gatherings during Christmas time, that we had a somewhat amusing adventure with a bear, an animal, by the way, which, though quite as dangerous as many to be found in the Indian jungle, is from its peculiarities also a comical beast at times and affords the sportsman much amusement.

On this particular occasion, however, it was not so much the conduct of the bear as that of some of the sportsmen which amused us. We were rather a large party, consisting of two Indian civilians and their wives, the district judge, the doctor, and myself.

The shikaris having marked down a couple of bears, we sallied forth one morning, the two ladies accompanying us on an elephant, from which they could watch the whole proceedings in absolute security.

On arrival at the jungle, we took up our respective places, and the beaters being already assembled, the beat began at once.

We had not long to wait, for presently one of the bears broke out in the direction of the post occupied by, let us say X, who, much to the amusement of the rest of us, was attired in a long frock-coat. How he came to have such a garment with him in camp, and why he had donned it to go bear-shooting in, we never discovered, but there it was, as originally created, silk facings and all complete.

However, notwithstanding his extraordinary, unsportsmanlike get-up, he was evidently quite at home with his rifle, and as the bear came nearer, he fired—but unfortunately missed—whereupon the beast promptly charged him.

Then ensued a scene as comical as any I have ever witnessed in the jungles, for our friend, after his miss, having apparently lost all confidence in his shooting powers

or those of his rifle, threw away the weapon and fled, closely pursued by the bear.

Running blindly between the two elephants in his terror—his coat-tails streaming out behind him—he continued his mad career, negotiating every obstacle in his path with extraordinary skill till his foot, catching in a creeper of uncompromising toughness, he fell and lay prone for a time.

Meanwhile the doctor, who had been posted on his right, seeing his friend's danger, had also fired at the bear, and by a lucky fluke, shot it through the head, and was now loudly proclaiming the feat, shouting in broad Scotch, " Get up, mon, get up. I've shot the bar."

When discussing the adventure that night round the camp fire after dinner, I was complimenting the doctor on his performance, he replied, " Eh, mon, but I felt that steady I could have killed a bumble bee at a thousand yards ! " I did not ask him whether he meant sitting, or on the wing !

CHAPTER IX

A bear adventure—Following up the tracks—A black object seen—An erroneous conclusion—Firing too hastily—An old woman shot dead—Howls from the Press—Bloodthirsty suggestions—Another bear adventure—A short-sighted sportsman—"Thinking it was a bear"—"What, not dead yet?"—The second barrel—A revelation and explanation—Disturbing the bees—Pandemonium—Horses stung to death—Floods in Khandesh—A perilous adventure—Saving a woman's life—Native gratitude—A thankless task—A change of headquarters—My mosque bungalow—Said to be haunted—The ghost appears—Life at Nundobar—Coursing jackals, etc.—Cholera epidemic—A village devastated—Lose my cook—Death of the apothecary—I turn doctor—A successful prescription—Administering the mixture—My patient recovers—A claim for damages—A police mutiny averted—Drastic measures—My orders upheld—My first attempt at spearing a panther on horseback—An exciting chase—The panther crouching—Avoids the thrust—Seeks refuge amongst the rocks—A lucky escape—Panther spearing—A dangerous but most attractive form of sport—Railways and their influence on game—Revisiting old hunting grounds—Ravages caused by axe and plough—The march of civilization—Jungle now devoid of game—*Sic transit gloria mundi.*

SHORTLY after the incident just related, we heard of another bear adventure or, rather, to put it more correctly, one in which a bear, although the object of pursuit, was not actually encountered, yet, indirectly, was the cause of what occurred.

A friend of ours—the Forest Officer of the district—was out shooting, and happening to come upon the fresh tracks of a bear, was following them up, when he saw a black object moving in the jungle, a little distance off. Concluding, very naturally in the circumstances, that this was the beast he was after, he fired and saw the animal, as he thought, fall in a heap.

Forcing his way through the jungle, he went up to it, when imagine his horror to find, instead of a bear, a rough, black blanket with an old woman lying dead beneath it.

It was a terrible disaster, and yet he could hardly be held to blame, for it appears that the woman had been stooping down gathering sticks, and in this attitude with the rough, black kumle or blanket over her shoulders, resembled no object more closely than a bear.

He was naturally much distressed, and eventually recompensed her relatives handsomely for the bereavement he had so unwillingly caused them, so that in the end she proved more profitable dead than alive. However, the matter eventually got into the native papers, which violently demanded that "the murderer" should be sentenced to death and that his execution should take place on the scene of the tragedy!

While on the subject of accidents in connection with bear shooting, I may mention another one I heard of later, which ought to have ended as fatally, but fortunately did not. Two district officials out after a bear, were posted on trees at some distance from each other. As the beaters approached, the senior of the two sportsmen, who was very short-sighted, and moreover rather deaf, saw something black moving in the jungle at some little distance from his post, and thinking it was the bear, promptly fired at it, evoking a response from the object which to his imperfect hearing seemed to be the cry of an animal in pain.

"What, not dead yet?" he exclaimed, and under the impression he had only wounded the beast—whereas he had missed it altogether—he fired the second barrel, and unfortunately with better success, for this time the response was louder, and in a voice which he now recognized as unmistakably human.

He now realized what had happened, and horrified at the thought that he had perhaps killed, or at any rate wounded, some native living in the neighbourhood, he clambered down the tree and ran up to the spot where he had fallen.

Here he found, not a native as he had imagined, but his own companion, lying on the ground, almost unconscious and bleeding profusely from a bullet wound in the shoulders, but mercifully too high up to be likely to prove serious.

He bandaged the wound up tightly with his kummerbund,

which happily stopped the flow of blood, and wetting the bandage with water from a stream near at hand, ran off to a neighbouring village, whence he returned shortly with a palki and some bearers to convey the wounded man to camp.

He found him quite conscious again, and able to explain how the accident had occurred. It appeared that while waiting for the beaters to come up, he had suddenly espied what looked to him like the footprints of a bear under his tree. Forgetting the risk he ran, and unwittingly adding to it by not removing a thick black ulster he had on, he climbed down and was stooping to examine the marks more closely when he felt the bullet strike him.

Fortunately, as it happened, the bullet was an ordinary one, fired from a smooth bore, hence the wound was not serious and eventually healed up, but the bullet was never extracted, and though he made a complete recovery, he carried it in his shoulder to his death, which occurred from natural causes many years later.

This incident should be a warning to all sportsmen never to leave their posts until the last beater has come up, for there is not only the danger from the tiger lying up, until he is almost trodden on, but, as in the instance quoted, of the rash sportsman being made a target of himself. I have known of even experienced sportsmen nearly coming to grief in this way.

Before we broke up the Christmas camp I have referred to, we had a most unpleasant experience with some bees, which I must relate if only to prove how dangerous the stings from these insects can be.

One day during our afternoon siesta we were roused by a terrible commotion in the camp caused, as we learnt later, by a police sepoy lighting his cooking fire under a tree in which there happened to be several nests of bees.

In a moment our quiet, peaceful camp was transformed into a veritable pandemonium, many large swarms having been roused by the smoke from this fire. I ran out at once and cut the heel ropes of the horses, being horribly stung about the face and hands during the process, for the little brutes hung on to me like bulldogs. One of the ladies in the camp wisely sought refuge under the mosquito

curtain of the bed, and so escaped, but the rest of us, including her husband, were all badly stung.

But the strangest part of the proceedings was that while all the human beings who were stung eventually recovered, two of our horses actually died from the effects of the stings. True, both these animals had been very severely bitten, yet one would hardly have imagined that a strong, comparatively thick-skinned animal like a horse, could be killed by the sting of so small an insect as a bee, however severely stung. It would be interesting to know whether such a case has been heard of before, though so far as my own experience goes, I believe it to be unique, or I would not have recorded it, for to be attacked by bees is by no means an uncommon experience when in camp or in the jungles.

* * * * *

Khandesh was periodically visited by heavy floods, which often carried away small villages situated on the banks of the Tapti river, and it was during one of its flooded periods that I met with a somewhat exciting, not to say dangerous, adventure.

I was moving my camp that day, and, on my way to the next encampment, was riding along the banks of the river mentioned, which at the moment was rushing like a torrent, when, amongst all the timber and different refuse sweeping past, I noticed what I took to be a chatte * bobbing up and down in the stream about forty yards off.

Examining it more carefully, I saw that it was a human head, and from the length of the hair on it, evidently that of a woman. On the impulse of the moment, and foolishly, perhaps, I spurred my horse into the river, but it was swept away from under me immediately and carried down the stream.

Left to swim alone, I managed with some difficulty to clutch the woman, and holding her up as best I could, we were swept some distance down, till we reached some shallow water, when, finding I had got a footing, I drew her on to the bank close to a village, where I found my horse, which the villagers had caught.

* Earthen pot for carrying water.

They soon lighted a fire, and by means of hot bricks and much vigorous rubbing, we eventually brought the woman round, for she was very nearly gone. However, once she was restored to consciousness, she was not long in making use of the faculties she had regained, though not exactly in the manner I expected.

Getting up on to her feet, she first shook herself just as a spaniel does when it lands after retrieving from the water, then, to my amazement, turned on me, using every abusive epithet she could think of, till her vocabulary being apparently exhausted, she went off.

The reason for this extraordinary, and seemingly unprovoked attack upon me was, I discovered afterwards, that, intending to commit suicide, she had thrown herself into the river, hence, so far from being grateful to me for having rescued her, she was exceedingly annoyed at what she probably considered my unwarrantable interference. Whether she eventually succeeded in accomplishing her object, I cannot say, but I noticed that when she went away it was not in the direction of the river! Possibly she had found drowning as a mode of self-destruction not so enjoyable as she had probably imagined it to be.

* * * * *

I have now come to the period of my service when, on the retirement of Colonel Probyn and the appointment of his successor, Colonel W——, as District Superintendent of Police, I, though still an Assistant Superintendent, was, at the recommendation of the former, appointed in addition as permanent Bhil Agent, which office also included, as I have before stated, that of Tiger Slayer.

Somewhere about this time, too, the Bombay Government, thinking it desirable that the Bhil Agent should live absolutely among the Bhils, a place called Nundobar was fixed upon as my headquarters, where an old mosque, on the summit of a hill, was converted into a bungalow.

This old building had the reputation of being haunted, and once on my return from tour I found my orderly, who had been left in charge, in a semi-conscious condition, his teeth clenched and presenting all the appearance of having suffered some severe mental shock.

On recovering he solemnly informed me that he awakened in the night and had seen an old man with a long grey beard walking up and down, who, on being challenged, had melted into space! An over-indulgence in his evening meal of rice was probably the origin of this apparition; anyway it was never seen again, nor were we ever troubled by any other ghosts.

My life at Nundobar was necessarily a solitary one, for except when a man or two came out to me for sport, I never saw a European. However, I was perfectly happy, living amongst the Bhils, and being in excellent health too, had no reason to complain.

What with my police and tiger-slaying duties, I had not much time to myself, but occasionally took a morning or afternoon off for coursing, both jackals and foxes being very numerous in the plains below my bungalow. The going was excellent too, and I had some first-rate Persian greyhounds, which I had purchased from the stables in Bombay when buying remounts for the troop of Mounted Police.

Nevertheless, my life was not all "beer and skittles," to use perhaps a vulgar, but most expressive, phrase, for we had once a very bad visitation of cholera, which swept away most of the inhabitants of a village some three miles from my bungalow, and though in my own establishment I took every precaution, I lost two orderlies and my cook, the last a serious blow!

This man and his wife were both attacked at the same time, and attended by the native apothecary, who, however, was struck down himself the next morning and died. The woman recovered, owing possibly to brandy and chlorodyne, which, being now without a medical expert, I prescribed and administered in large doses.

But—such is the curious working of the native mind—she was no sooner convalescent and able to get about, than she came up to my bungalow and insisted I should present her with a new "sari,"* declaring that I had ruined the last.

It appears that in administering my remedies I had

* Clothing worn by native women.

spilled some of the mixture over her sari and stained it! The fact that I had done this in my attempt to save her life was, apparently in her estimation, no excuse for damaging her clothes.

Battling with epidemic, however, was not my only trouble in those days, for in the process of the amalgamation of the Bhil Corps with the Khandesh Constabulary, which took place during this period, I had considerable difficulties with the men; the rearrangement of pay and grades, etc., as well as the fear of losing distinction as a separate corps, causing great dissatisfaction amongst the latter.

Finally matters became so serious that I had the ringleaders up before me, and after inquiring fully into their grievance, summarily dismissed ten of their number. These measures, though decidedly somewhat drastic, had, however, the effect of quashing what might otherwise have developed into a serious mutiny.

Shortly afterwards, happening to be staying at Government House at the time, his Excellency questioned me on the subject, adding that he had received a number of petitions in connection with their dismissals. However, being fortunately able to satisfy him as to the necessity for acting as I had done, he was good enough not only to uphold my action, but to compliment me.

* * * * *

To the north of my bungalow at Nundobar was a long range of hills, covered with dense cactus bushes, affording good shelter for such animals as bear, leopard, and wild pig.

Riding out early one morning with a sowar * on the chance of coming across a boar, I came suddenly on a huge panther in the open. He had killed a chinkara,† and was lying up under the shelter of some bushes.

On seeing me he made off at once for the hillside some sixty yards distant; but as I was riding an exceptionally staunch horse, and the ground was fairly level, I thought it an excellent opportunity—especially as the sowar was

* Police trooper. † Ravine deer.

carrying my hog-spear—of trying my hand at spearing a panther off horseback.

Telling the man to follow me, I started after the beast at once at racing speed, for the distance was short, and I knew that if he reached the hill before me I was done. Fortunately, my horse being as fast as he was plucky, we won, and I was about to lower the spear for a thrust when the panther, now scarcely his length in front of me, stopped suddenly and crouched.

Going at the pace we were, I had neither time to check my speed nor to drop the point of my spear, which, as we flashed past him, merely glanced harmlessly over the panther's back, and before I could pull up and wheel round, the beast had reached some rocks, where it was impossible to follow him.

Meanwhile my orderly, having come to grief over a dry watercourse, had had a nasty fall, the horse rolling over him. He was accordingly literally *hors de combat*, and had been so for some time. I was greatly disappointed at not getting the panther, at the same time I quite realized that he had come very near to getting me instead, for crouched as he was all ready for a spring, had I wounded him in passing, he would certainly have sprung on to me.

The panther, always a dangerous animal, is never more so than when crouching, for its hind legs, being then doubled up beneath it, act like springs under compression, it can bound from this position in a second, and to a distance almost inconceivable in an animal of its size and weight. Then again, to inflict a fatal wound on a panther with a spear from horseback, is not so easy, for the skin fits so loosely that unless the thrust is delivered absolutely at right angles to the body, which is seldom possible, the point of the spear, instead of penetrating the flesh, will often pass between it and the skin, thus inflicting a painful, but not necessarily a fatal or even incapacitating wound.

Thus it will be seen that spearing panthers from horseback is, on the whole, a dangerous form of sport. At any rate, it is one in which the hunter and the hunted are more equally matched than in any other contest between man

and beast ; in fact, the odds, if any, are possibly in favour of the latter.

Nevertheless, in spite of the risks attending it, or more probably because of them, there is no kind of hunting done on horseback—pig-sticking even not excepted—more attractive to the sportsman than " riding a panther," as this form of sport is sometimes called.

But alas ! so far as this portion of the country is concerned, there are now no panthers left to ride, nor game of any kind to course or shoot. The Tapti Valley Railway now runs through Nundobar, and has long since scared away all game for miles around, as the advent of railways always does.

Many years later, while travelling by this line, I passed the scene of my early wanderings, and was shocked to see the change. The old haunted bungalow was still there, but the well-stocked jungles and hunting-grounds I remembered had, under the axe and plough, all passed away for ever. *Sic transit gloria mundi* I might well have cried, for truly all its glory had departed from the land !

CHAPTER X

My duties as tiger slayer—Panthers included—Some description of them—Variety of the species—Size, weight, and markings—What they prey on—Climbing powers—Their courage and ferocity in attack—How they feed on their kills—Man-eating leopards—The black panther rare—The cheetah—Panthers difficult to locate—Returning to their kills—Dangerous to follow up—An experiment with buckshot—S.S.G. best for close quarters—Panther unexpectedly encountered—My shikari attacked and mauled—A huge beast—Another panther hunt—Attacks and mauls beater—Its final charge—Finished with S.S.A.—The uncertainty of sport—Killed with a single shot—Handsomely marked skins—An unusual sight—Tiger and panther seen together—Abject terror of the latter—Slinking off into the jungle—A tiger's sovereignty of the jungles—The wild boar excepted—Uncertainty the fascination of Indian sport—An unexpected meeting with a bear—Bagged—Capture the cub—Becomes quite tame in time—Walking out with the dogs—A leopard adventure in Bengal—Shooting for the pot—A partridge shot—Retrieving the bird—Sudden appearance of a leopard—Changing cartridges—Leopard dropped but still alive—Attempts to charge—No more ball cartridge—On the horns of a dilemma—My orderly's ingenuity—An extemporised projectile—Complete success.

ALTHOUGH the main object of my appointment as tiger slayer was, naturally, the destruction of these particular animals, yet, though not officially stated, the office was intended to include the reduction of all other beasts of prey dangerous to human life or cattle, especially leopards or panthers, as they are equally often termed.

As these animals are actually far more destructive to cattle and goats, and more numerous, too, than tigers, I was as assiduous in my efforts to destroy them and experienced many an exciting adventure while in their pursuit. Before relating some of these, however, it would perhaps be as well to give a short description of these animals and their ways, for although much of what I have said regarding tigers applies also to the leopard, yet there are many points on which the two animals differ very materially.

The great variety in their species render classification

very difficult, but except in the case of the black leopard the difference is practically only in size, the larger variety in India being, rightly or wrongly, generally spoken of as panthers. Some naturalists, I believe, are of opinion that a panther and leopard are of two distinct species, claiming that the skulls of the two are somewhat different in shape, but though I have compared many a score I have never been able to detect any difference between any two, large and small.

A leopard, or panther, varies in size from six to eight feet in length, the last being very rare, and weighs between 160 and 180 pounds. His colouring is too well known to need description. In the smaller animal the black spots are closer together than in the larger beast; hence the latter often appears to be of a lighter colour when seen in the jungles.

Like the tiger, the skin of the leopard grows fainter in colour as the animal increases in years. Leopards frequent belts of jungle, rocky hills, and caverns, from the last of which it is generally most difficult to dislodge them.

They are, as I have already mentioned, far more destructive to the smaller cattle and goats than tigers, often coming into a village to carry off a goat or calf, and are also specially attracted by dogs, which they have been known to carry off from the verandah of a bungalow, and even from inside a tent.

Leopards, too, are capable of climbing trees, which they can go up as easily as cats,* and are often to be found lying hidden among leaves and overhanging branches, on the look-out for monkeys, which, in spite of their activity, they occasionally secure.

Though less powerful in attack than a tiger, the leopard is, I consider, a far more dangerous animal for the sportsman to encounter, as he is more easily provoked to anger and exceedingly courageous in his retaliation. I have been repeatedly charged by these animals, and on two occasions have had my men mauled by them.

In eating his "kills" a leopard, unlike the tiger, seldom attacks the hindquarters first, but almost invariably tears

* See "Life in the Indian Police," p. 213, by the author.

PANTHER (Khandesh).
A Nasty Customer.

To face p. 72.

open the belly—making his meal off the intestines—covering up the remaining portion with leaves, etc., to keep for later consumption.

Man-eating leopards are happily rare, for when one happens to take to killing human beings, he is far more to be dreaded than any other man-eating animal, and his victims may run to a score or two—sometimes many more." *

The black leopard or panther is very rarely met with, these animals generally confining themselves to thick forest beyond the haunts of men. I have never had the good fortune to come across one; but have seen the skins, which are of uniform dull black colour, the spots showing in particular lights only.

Another distinct variety is the snow leopard found throughout the Himalayas at great elevations. It is beautifully marked of a silver grey colour with darker spots, the fur being long and very soft.

The cheetah or hunting leopard, though often erroneously classed amongst leopards is quite a different species; in fact, a different animal altogether. He is small in the loins like a greyhound, and his claws, though long, are not retractile, neither are they curved to the same extent as are others of the genus *Feli*. The cheetah, moreover, unlike the real leopard, is apparently easily tamed and taught to hunt antelope, for which purpose they are kept by native princes of India.

Unlike the tiger, the leopard is very difficult to mark down. He seldom remains near his kill, preferring some distant ravine or adjacent hill. It is only by watching over a goat or calf tied up as bait, that there is any certainty of bringing him to bag. Still, I have shot a great number of them, but mostly over animals which they had just killed.

But although the leopard does not always remain near his kill, he usually returns to it at dusk for a second meal; but as he sometimes puts in an appearance much sooner, it is advisable for the sportsman to take up his position early in the afternoon, either on a tree or behind some

* See the author's last work, "Tigerland," p. 76.

natural barrier, such as a thick bush. But the watcher must be careful not to move or make the slightest noise, as the leopard is most wary and cautious in approaching his kill.

In following up a wounded leopard, the very greatest caution is always necessary, as the most practised eye cannot discover these animals unless they are on the move, their colour assimilating so perfectly to the ground and jungle they are in as to render them practically invisible.

It is this peculiarity which makes a wounded leopard so dangerous an animal to follow, for the sportsman may be quite close to him and yet be quite unaware of the fact till he charges, which he will certainly do in nine cases out of ten and with a courage and ferocity far exceeding that of a tiger, and is, moreover, so quick in his movements that he is extremely difficult to kill, as he is also a very small target to aim at.

When shooting on one occasion with Probyn and W—— of the Civil Service, we had marked down a panther in the bed of a river close to our camp. By the shouts of the beaters, we soon knew the beast was started, and presently it came out and stood facing us about twenty yards distant, Probyn and myself being on foot and W—— on a tree on the opposite bank.

As soon as the panther appeared, Probyn whispered to me that he would take the shot, as he was anxious to try the effects of buck-shot on one of these animals, and this was an excellent opportunity. On the report of the gun the panther charged, with lightning rapidity, straight for the smoke.

When within five paces, however, he swerved to the right, and I shot him through the shoulder with my Rigby. Nevertheless, he managed to reach a patch of cypress into which he disappeared. We had an elephant out with us, and mounting it, cautiously approached the spot, where we found him lying dead.

On skinning the beast later we found that some of the pellets had pierced the lungs, which no doubt would eventually have killed him.

The cartridge (Kynoch's brass) was loaded with 5 drams

of powder and 16 mould or S.S.G. shot. Since then I invariably used S.S.G. in the left barrel in following up wounded panthers; at close quarters it is most effective.

On another occasion, when out beating for hog at Ner (Khandesh), I came suddenly upon a huge panther, as large nearly as a small tiger, which was quietly trotting out towards a small, rocky hill about two hundred yards distant.

Snatching a Snider carbine from my sowar who was with me, I galloped after the beast and made a lucky shot from the saddle, crippling him behind, on which he laid up in a small bush a short way ahead.

My men now coming up, I dismounted and we walked up to the bush, when the panther, with one bound, was on the top of my shikari Etoo, then a havildar in the corps, hanging on to his shoulder with his teeth. I could not fire for fear of killing the man, so seizing a spear from my syce, I drove it with both hands through the panther's side, killing him at once.

Etoo was badly mauled about the arms and shoulder, but being only some sixteen miles from Dhulia, I was able to despatch him the same afternoon to the hospital, where under skilful medical treatment he eventually recovered completely from his wounds.

This panther measured eight feet—an exceptionally big measurement—and was very old and light in colour.

At this same camp I had wounded a panther with a snap shot in the foot, and on following up his tracks, found him crouching in a thick coriander bush in the bed of a river.

On going round the bush to get a better view, his head and shoulders being partly hidden by some boughs, he suddenly charged out and knocked over my gun-bearer, stripping him of my shikar bag and water-bottle.

He now got further into the bush, and we were considering how best to attack him, when out he came again with a savage roar, and striking down a man to my right, inflicted two deep wounds in his thigh. So quick had been his movements on both occasions that I had no time to fire.

We now retreated to some distance, and on one of my men firing into the thicket, under my direction, the panther again, for the third time, charged out straight for the guns, when I met him with a charge of S.S.G. in the face, killing him at once.

This panther measured seven feet two inches, and was the most determinedly aggressive of any I have ever come across, and furnished a good example of the ferocity these animals are capable of displaying when roused.

And yet—such is the glorious uncertainty of sport—even a leopard, savage as they almost invariably are, can sometimes be bagged with as little difficulty as a rabbit or a hare, as the following incident will show.

I was once watching over the remains of a young buffalo, which had been killed by a large panther, when I suddenly heard the beast behind me making that curious rasping, grating sound peculiar to these animals.

So dense was the cover, however, that I could not see him, and being on foot, with no better shelter than a light screen of bushes between us, I naturally felt somewhat uncomfortable. Presently the noise ceased and I was wondering whether, having seen or scented me, he had sneaked off, when he leisurely walked out into the open from a bush opposite to me and only about five yards off.

I felt at once that I had him, so quietly raising the rifle to my shoulder, I fired, planting my bullet, as I found later, exactly in the centre of his chest, and of course killing him on the spot. He was a fine, handsome beast, and with a beautifully marked skin, which I had much pleasure in adding to my collection. For there is probably no finer sporting trophy to be obtained than a perfect leopard skin, that is one taken from an animal shot while in its prime, and preferably towards the end of the cold season, when the fur is at its longest and best. Though less imposing in respect of size than that of a tiger, it presents a handsomer appearance, possibly by reason of a more equal blending of the colours.

Nevertheless, when seen together in the jungle—a sight which I had once the good fortune to witness—the leopard in spite of the greater beauty of its colourings, sinks into

It was only now that my friend discovered he had no more ball cartridges left, but knowing that if near enough, he could finish off the animal with a charge of No. 6, he tried again to make the elephant advance, but with no better success, and as it was now getting dark, he decided to get off.

To walk up to a wounded leopard with a weapon charged with shot was, as he knew, a risky thing to do, but he felt he could not leave the beast to linger through the night in pain, so was resolved to take the risk.

Fortunately at this moment his orderly was suddenly inspired with an idea, which he proceeded to demonstrate at once. Extracting the shot from a cartridge, he tore a strip from his pugri, and putting the pellets into it, rolled them up tightly into a ball, then replacing the charge, handed the cartridge to his master.

The latter, quick to see the possibilities of this extemporised projectile, lost no time in testing it, and the next time the leopard raised its head, in its attempt to charge, he fired, killing it on the spot, for as he found later, the charge had sped like a bullet, but scattering on impact had made a frightful wound, an inch or two below the ear. His first bullet, he now discovered, had hit the animal in the back, and grazing the spine, had paralyzed the hindquarters, thus accounting for its inability to charge.

CHAPTER XI

Take three months' leave—A shooting trip to Central Provinces—A fine shooting country—Local shikaris—A monster tiger bagged—Hear of many bears—Sitting up at night—A great fusillade—Surprising result—My feat with a ·360—Hitting the right spot—A fine bison brought to bag—Stalking a herd—Within ten yards of a bull—A tempting shot—Taking a risk—The ·360 scores again—Astonishing my friends—A remarkable performance—Small bores not suitable for big game—Exceptional cases—The Indian bison—Where to be found—Average size of—General appearance—Description of the horns—Difference between bulls and cows—Difficult to approach—Solitary bulls—Savage and morose—Stalking two bulls—Risking a shot—"Missed!"—A long chase—Come upon them at last—Off again—Another long chase—Found once more—A right and left—Doubt as to result—Following up—A pleasing surprise—Both found dead—Camping out for the night—A favourite resort for bison—Encounter with a solitary bull—The first shot—Following up tracks—A determined charge—Effects of an 8-bore—Why solitary bulls are savage—Dangerous not only to sportsmen—Expelled from herds—Solitary wild elephants and buffalo.

In the early part of the year 1888 I took three months' leave and accompanied by I—— D—— of the Civil Service, and T—— S—— of the Public Works Department, went on a shooting trip to the Central Provinces.

This part of India had not been much shot over in those days, hence we had some excellent sport, our bag, as far as I remember, amounting to eleven tigers, three panthers, six bear, besides several buffalo and bison.

We took a party of the Bhil Corps with us, and were therefore independent of the local shikaris, though we found the Ghonds * excellent beaters, and very useful in the matter of supplying information of tigers, etc., in the neighbourhood.

We were greatly assisted, too, by the Forest Officer of the Chanda District, who, poor fellow, was shortly afterwards killed by a buffalo.

* A local tribe.

Of the eleven tigers we bagged, one, which fell to my rifle, measured ten feet two inches, the record so far as my own shooting is concerned, for I have never shot one bigger, and yet, strangely enough, it gave me less trouble to secure than many considerably smaller.

I had taken up my position in a tree overlooking a dry watercourse, and as the beaters approached, the animal came walking down this nullah. As he was passing the tree I fired, and at the shot, which struck him high up in the shoulder, he gave a savage roar, and springing up the bank close under my very tree, was looking to right and left in search of his hidden foe, when I dropped him with the second barrel.

He was a very old tiger, light in colour, and, I remember, much scarred about the face, possibly the scars from wounds received in combat with others of his kind, or in a battle with a boar.

At one of our camps in the Chanda District, we heard of a number of bears in the neighbourhood, and as they were said to frequent a pool of water near the tents, D—— and I decided to sit up for them, so had a machan * erected, and taking our blankets, settled down for the night.

Soon after dark, and just as the moon was rising, we heard a couple of bears on the hill opposite us, making a fiendish noise, evidently engaged in an amorous encounter.

A little later one of them—or so we assumed, for we could only make out a moving mass of black—came down to the water and was sent off screaming with a broken shoulder in the direction whence it came. After this we carried on a fusillade for the greater part of the night, taking alternate chances. I forget how many shots we fired between us, but I know we only bagged one bear!

I dislike night shooting, and this was the last but one occasion—when I missed a tiger—that I have ever indulged in this kind of sport.

One day we were beating a strip of jungle for sambar, or anything else that might turn up, when a bear came shuffling along a narrow path opposite my position.

Thinking this a good opportunity for trying the effect of my little ·360 Express on one of these animals, I took a

* Platform.

careful aim for his shoulder and fired, the distance being about ten yards. At the shot the bear spun round, and made short rushes in all directions, growling savagely the while.

I now blazed into him as fast as I could load, telling my shikari, who had my heavy rifle, that he was on no account to fire unless the bear got hold of me in the scuffle, and in the end I managed to kill him with a shot in the temple.

Since then, as will be seen later, I have killed a bull bison with this little rifle, thus proving that, providing an animal is hit in the *right spot*, a light rifle is as deadly as a heavier weapon, no matter what the size of the beast may be. The rifle in question was built by Henry of Edinburgh, for that well-known sportsman the late Colonel Baigree.

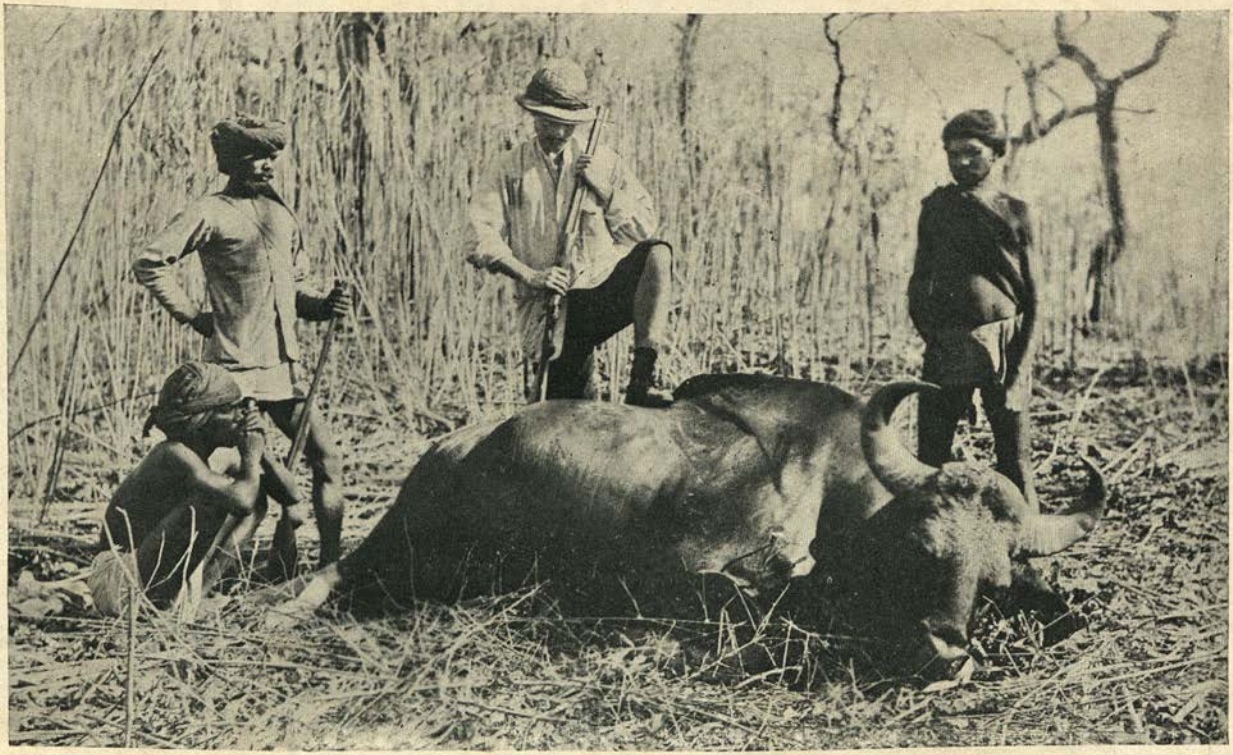
A few days after my adventure with this bear, S—— bagged a very fine bull bison. It took two men to bring in his head, and as I told S—— at the time, although I was well satisfied with my ten feet two inches tiger, I would willingly have exchanged with him for that grand old bull, whose measurements I never capped, though I have shot many of these animals since.

Of these, the most notable, though not in point of size, was the one I have just referred to as having shot with the ·360 rifle. The incident happened in the Satpudas, where I was shooting on one occasion with Captain, now Colonel, P——, whom I had known well when attached to his regiment, the 19th Bombay Infantry.

We were encamped in the depths of the jungle, far away from any human habitation. The jungle cocks were crowing as we turned out in the morning and ascended the mountain, accompanied by our beaters, to look for sambar.

Hardly had we separated with the intention of watching different passes or "runs" accessible to the deer, when Bapu, my shikari, pointed to some dull objects far away in the valley below us. My field-glasses told me they were bison, and we at once commenced a stalk.

There was one bull and four cows in the herd, and the wind being favourable, I crawled up to a bamboo clump within ten yards of them. I had my heavy rifle, also the



Bapu. Digby Davies. *To face p.* 82.

A FINE BISON BAGGED.

·360 Express, which I invariably carried with me in case I came across any pea-fowl, etc.

The bull was standing broadside on, exposing his neck and shoulder in such a way as to ensure a deadly shot, and tempted by this, I decided to use the smaller weapon. Taking a most careful aim about three inches behind the ear, I pressed the trigger.

Instantaneously, as if struck by lightning, the mighty beast fell dead. It seemed almost incredible, but there it lay, absolutely motionless. However, knowing that I should have some difficulty in convincing my friend, I cut off its tail, then going back to him, made him put his finger down the muzzle of my heavy rifle, then look down the barrel of the other, and when I saw that he was satisfied I had used the latter, I produced the tail!

On going up to the animal, we found a minute hole, hardly perceptible where the little bullet had entered. Nevertheless, small as it was, it had divided the jugular vein in two, thus causing instantaneous death.

This was the most remarkable instance of a large and powerful animal being killed by a single shot, and from so small a rifle, that I had ever seen or heard of and only proves, as I have said, how much depends on the placing of the shot.

At the same time, I do not mean by this to advocate the general use of small-bore rifles for such large game, as it must be remembered that this was quite an exceptional case, for the odds against obtaining a quiet, steady shot at so short a distance as ten yards are probably about a hundred to one, especially in the case of a bison, which is an extremely wary beast and most difficult to get near.

Nevertheless, there is no animal in the Indian jungle more worthy of the hunter's best efforts to secure, for the Indian bison * is truly a magnificent animal. It is found in all the larger forests and is fairly plentiful in Kanara, the Central Provinces, and on the bamboo-clad spurs of the Satpudas in Khandesh, where I have shot a considerable number.

The average height of a bull is about six feet at the shoulder and its length from nine to ten feet. They are of

* Indian bison (*Bos Gaurus*).

a dark copper colour, which in mature old bulls deepens to black.

The legs, from the knee downwards, are of a dirty white colour, and also the forehead, which is covered with short, curly hair, while inside the thigh and forearm, the hair is bright chestnut. The head is square with a peculiar formation of the frontal bone which projects above, muzzle large and full, the eyes are blue and ears broad and fan-shaped. Neck short, heavy, and immensely powerful, ending in a chest broad, deep, and muscular.

Above the back and immediately above the shoulders rises a ridge, which ends abruptly halfway down the back with a drop of nearly five inches in large bulls. The legs are short and thick, and the hoofs small for so large an animal and like those of a deer in shape. The tail is about thirty inches long with a tuft of hair at its extremity.

The horns of the old bulls are massive, rugged, and indented at the base, and often worn out at the points. The cows are lighter in make and colour than the bulls, and their horns are more slender and upright with a more inward curvature, while the frontal ridge is scarcely perceptible. Finally, there is a peculiar smell about the whole animal like that of fresh herbs or thyme. Cow bisons calve in September, April, and May. Unlike the bulls, they are of a reddish-brown colour.

Bison seldom form herds of more than twenty or thirty individuals. They feed on various grasses, bamboos, leaves, etc. They are extremely shy, and, as I have said, difficult to approach, their sense of smell being extraordinarily acute.

The solitary bison is invariably an old bull, turned out of the herd by his more youthful rivals, and in consequence is savage and morose, but always a fine specimen of his race, and usually carries the best head.

But to return to my narrative. I was shooting at Ghoramba (Satpudas) once, when early in the day, we came upon the tracks of two bull bison close to a pool of water, where they had evidently been drinking during the night. After two hours' tracking we came up with them, feeding in some dense bamboo jungle.

Stalking to within twenty yards of them, I was about to

fire at the largest when they winded us and made off, but following at a run, I got a snap shot at the leading bull and missed.

I soon realized the mistake I had made in firing this hasty shot, for the animals were now thoroughly alarmed, and I knew it meant many hours of weary tracking before we could come up with them again. However, we took up the spoor over a grassy plateau, and at last, just as the sun was setting behind the hills, we sighted them, quietly browsing on the tender shoots of the bamboo in a valley below us.

They were about a hundred yards away, and I was considering how best to circumvent them, the breeze being very shifty, when there was a sudden crash—they had winded us and were off again. I ran for all I was worth to head them off, followed by my henchman Bapu, who was carrying my rifle.

We went tearing along down the steep incline and then along the ridge, both greatly out of breath, when coming to an opening in the forest, I suddenly sighted the two bulls standing about fifty yards to my right. Stretching out my right hand behind me, Bapu handed me the Express rifle, which was fortunately loaded with solid bullets.

I now fired at the big bull with the right barrel, aiming for the point of the shoulder, and emptied the left at his companion, when they both wheeled round and disappeared into some dense covert ahead. I knew I had hit the first bull in the right spot, but was uncertain about the second, as his head and shoulders were partly hidden by a branch when I fired. However, following up the first by its blood tracks, we soon came upon him, and, to my delight, also the second, both lying dead within a few yards of each other!

It took some time and trouble to cut off the heads of these two monsters, and night had long set in before we completed the operation, so collecting some wood, we lit a fire and camped out for the night, our dinner consisting of bison steak cut from along the dorsal ridge of one of the two bulls.

Ghoramba, at the time I am writing of—some twenty years ago—used to be a very favourite resort for bison, the country being high and well wooded with extensive bamboo jungles.

One of my later adventures with bison was an encounter I had with a solitary bull. I was out one morning with my Bhils, looking for game, when we came upon his tracks, and after going some distance, saw him grazing on an open glade about a hundred yards off.

The jungle being only partially burnt, and the ground covered with dry teak leaves, made stalking very difficult. However, with care I managed to crawl up to within thirty yards of him, and kneeling behind a fallen tree, I fired. He staggered on receiving the shot, and we saw that one of his forelegs was disabled.

He made off, however, so taking up the blood tracks, we presently came on him, standing behind a bamboo clump. As soon as he caught sight of us he rattled his horns against the bamboos, then pawing the ground for a moment, charged most determinedly. A shot from the 8-bore I was using struck him exactly in the centre of the chest, and raking him from stem to stern, dropped him dead in his tracks.

He was a splendid, old, solitary bull, the largest I had then killed, with a very fine head, and had evidently been engaged in many a fight, for he was very much battered and scarred all over.

These solitary bulls are, as I have already said, invariably savage, because, having been driven out of the herd, they are forced to lead a lonely life, which seems to make them most vindictive and morose, and therefore dangerous, not only to sportsmen, but to any people residing in the neighbourhood whom they may happen to encounter.

Unfortunately, too, this practice of expelling a turbulent male member from the herd is not confined to bison, but is also resorted to by wild elephants and buffalo, and with worse results, for while a solitary bull elephant, or rogue as he is called, is admittedly the most formidable animal in existence, a solitary bull buffalo runs him very close; in fact, being possessed of greater cunning, is possibly the more dangerous of the two.

A description of these animals, and of some of the adventures I have had with them, will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII

The Indian wild buffalo—Its size, appearance and habitat—Dangers in tracking them up—An encounter with a solitary bull—A shot with a 10-bore rifle—Hit but not disabled—At bay—Effects of a second shot—Threatening to charge—A timely shot—Floored—A herd encountered—Selecting the bull—Badly hit, but makes off—Found lying up—Dead or alive?—The question unexpectedly solved—The advantage of being prepared—A shot in the chest—The last gallop—Buffalo shooting a dangerous pastime—Poor trophies as a rule—The Indian bear—A terror to the native—Attack without provocation—Many victims—Bears uncertain in temper—Effects of feeding on intoxicating berries—Dangerous to tackle—Very tenacious of life—Size and general appearance—Where found—The best plan for bear shooting—They afford good sport—Two narrow escapes—An exciting adventure—No room for two to pass—A lucky shot—The non-dangerous big game of India—First in size and importance—The sambar—Some description of this animal—A good head—A fine trophy—The bara-sing or swamp deer—Its resemblance to the red deer—The chetul or spotted deer—The handsomest of the deer tribe—The barking deer—The mouse and hog deer described.

THE Indian wild buffalo * is found in the swampy Terai, in the plains of Lower Bengal, in Assam, Burmah, and Central India.

A bull buffalo often stands nineteen hands at the shoulder and measures as much as fifteen feet from nose to root of tail. His head is long and narrow, almost free from hair and of a dark, black, slaty colour; the tail is short, and does not extend below the hocks. The horns are enormous, and have been known to exceed twelve feet measured round the curve from tip to tip. The females produce one, sometimes two, young, always in the summer season after a period of gestation of ten months.

Buffalo delight in swamps, where they can obtain rich pasturage, and also wallow in the mud during the heat of the day. Unlike the bison, they never ascend to heights.

* *Babalus Arni.*

In the Central Provinces, where I have shot them, they are found in the Sal forests and in the swampy plains, where the long, rank grass affords them both food and cover. Buffaloes are extremely vicious, more so than the bison, and when wounded, invariably charge.

There is probably no animal in existence so determined, and if followed up when wounded, have a trick of turning off their course, and concealing themselves in some dense bush or high grass, when they will rush unexpectedly on the trackers ; hence are exceedingly dangerous to track up.

When shooting in the Central Provinces, I was out one morning looking for bara-singi * accompanied by a Ghond shikari, when we came upon the fresh tracks of a solitary bull buffalo. After following the tracks some three miles, the animal suddenly jumped up in front of us out of a patch of high grass in which he had been lying.

I was carrying a 10-bore rifle by Dixon, with which I fired immediately, aiming at the point of his shoulder. On receiving the shot, he lurched forward and made off into some thick bush, where he disappeared.

Following the blood trail for about a hundred yards, we came upon him, standing behind a bush about a dozen yards to our front. On seeing us he trotted forward a few paces, and stood there, pawing the ground and looking altogether exceedingly unpleasant.

I now fired at his chest, bringing him to his knees, but he was up again in a moment, and would probably have charged, but I ran in closer and floored him with a bullet in the neck. He had a very fine pair of horns, and as he lay looked enormous, the neck in particular displaying extraordinary powers.

A few days after this, my man reported a herd of buffaloes, said to be in an old paddy, or rice field, about three miles off. I went out at once, and eventually succeeded in creeping up to within twenty yards of them.

The herd consisted of one bull and six cows. Selecting the bull, I fired at him, breaking his shoulder ; but in spite of this, he managed to get away with the others across an open plain ; however, following on the blood

* Swamp deer, lit. 12-horned.

tracks we soon came up to him lying in some bushes. The tips of the horns were all that I could see, so, not knowing whether the beast was still alive or dead, I approached a little nearer to find out, when up he sprang with a snort. Fortunately, I was prepared, and as he got up I hit him with the right barrel in the centre of the chest.

He turned on receiving the shot, when I let him have the contents of the other barrel in the shoulder. Nevertheless, he galloped off and covered quite twenty yards before he fell over, dead.

I could relate many another adventure I have had with these animals, but from these two incidents alone it will be seen that buffalo shooting is not only an exciting pastime, but apt to be dangerous, too, at times. The heads, unless they happen to be out of the way in size, are not much valued as trophies, but the skin is of great thickness and much prized by the natives for making into shields, thongs, etc.

While on the subject of dangerous big game in Indian jungles—I mean animals dangerous to human life—I must not omit to mention the Indian bear,* for, with the exception of a man-eating tiger or leopard, both happily very rare, there is no animal more dreaded by the natives and with good reason.

For example, tigers and leopards, unless they happen to be man-eaters, will seldom attack human beings unprovokedly, on the contrary, are generally more anxious to avoid them; whereas the bear, without the smallest provocation, will go for a man at sight.

Wood-cutters and others, whose business takes them into the jungles, often fall victims to these attacks, and there was hardly a village in the Satpudas where one or two of the villagers did not bear on their persons the claw-marks of these vicious brutes.

Armed with formidable claws about three inches in length, they use them freely and with great effect, striking, when they have the opportunity, with the forepaws and cow-kicking with the hind ones, and cases have been known of sportsmen being entirely scalped by one downward blow of the paw, and even killed with one blow.

* *Ursus Labiatus.*

The temper of a bear, too, is very uncertain, and appears to be affected by the season of the year, as well as by the food they exist on. The Bhils declare—and I am of their opinion—that during the "mourah" season bears are particularly vicious, as they eat largely of these berries and are said to be affected by its intoxicating juice, which is quite likely, as a very strong liquor is distilled from these berries.

They are dangerous beasts to tackle, too, for apart from their formidable claws, they are very tenacious of life, and unless knocked over at once, take a lot of killing. When two or three bears are together, on one being wounded, it will often turn on the others and attack them savagely as if under the impression that they had inflicted the injury.

An Indian bear measures from five to six feet in length, stands nearly three feet high, and weighs from fifteen to twenty stone. He is a mass of coarse, shaggy, black hair, with a whity-brown muzzle. On his breast he bears a crescent or V-shaped mark resembling a horse-shoe, sometimes orange in colour, but more often white. A shot in the centre of this mark, when the animal stands erect, as it often does in attacking, is generally fatal at once.

Bears frequent rocky hills, caves, deep ravines, and thick bush. In Bengal they are generally found in Purundi, or wild cardamum, jungles. Their food consists chiefly of roots, honey—which they are particularly partial to—and insects of all kinds, especially white ants. They are also very fond, as I have said, of the mourah blossom.

The sight of the bear, like that of an elephant, is very poor, but, on the other hand, his sense of smell is extraordinarily acute.

The best plan of bringing bears to bag is to send men out to mark them down in the early morning, the men taking up their positions by early dawn on all the prominent hill-tops and peaks, so as to command, if possible, all the ravines and hill-sides. They will then, as soon as the sun rises, be able to see the animals seeking shelter, after their night's ramble and feed, in thick bamboo clumps, fragments of rock, etc., from which they can be easily beaten out. This method of marking down bears, however, can only be carried out in fairly bare, mountainous country.

BULL BISON (Khandesh).
Shot with ·360 Express.

THE BEAR. [*To face p.* 90.
Shot with ·360 Express.

A NARROW ESCAPE

Although bears are not in the same category with the tiger or panther in point of danger to the sportsman, still they afford excellent sport, especially in localities where they can be attacked on foot. They are gregarious animals, and I have often killed two or three of a family.

When sleeping out on one occasion under one of the mourah trees I have spoken of, I was suddenly awakened during the night by an enormous bear, which had come in quest of the berries, which, when ripe, drop to the ground.

Drawing my revolver from under my pillow, I fired in the direction from which the noise seemed to be proceeding and heard the animal moving off. When morning dawned, however, we found his broad footprints within a few yards of my bed!

On another occasion, too, I had a very narrow escape from one of these animals at a place called Warangaon, in Khandesh. I had wounded a very large bear, and in my eagerness to get him, ran after him down a steep hill, when suddenly he turned and nearly got me round the waist.

I managed, however, to put a bullet into him just in time, but so close was he that his hair was singed all over the chest with the flash from my rifle. He was finished off by my men, who fortunately came up at this moment.

Hearing of some bears once at a place called Chappani, I moved my camp there. The men who had preceded me the night before, had marked down one of these bears in a mass of broken rocks on the side of a hill.

I was posted on a narrow path on the side of a steep slope, covered with high grass and reeds, leading to the rocks amongst which the bear was said to be lying.

Soon I heard the shouts of the beaters, and presently saw the bear, a very large male, coming towards me. The path, as I have said, was a very narrow one, and as there was no room for the animal to pass me, I allowed him to come up to within ten paces and then fired, the shot striking him in the centre of the chest, sent him rolling down the hill, where he was picked up, quite dead. He was a huge animal, enormously fat, with a fine, shaggy coat.

* * * * *

In addition to those mentioned in this and previous chapters, the only other wild animals of India dangerous to human life, and therefore of greater interest from the sporting point of view, are the rhinoceros and boar.

Of the first I have had no personal experience worth recording, as they are only to be found in the dense jungles of Assam and parts of Lower Bengal. The boar, however, I know well and shall have something to say about him later on, but in a chapter to himself; for to include him amongst the animals I had *shot* in India, would be to proclaim myself as great a criminal as if, in a hunting district at home, I confessed to having shot a fox!

I have, however, still many shooting adventures to relate, for although the bear ends the list of dangerous wild animals in India, I have not as yet exhausted the numerous experiences I have had with the latter, some of which, I trust, may prove at least as interesting as those already told.

Meanwhile, I propose to give a short account of what I may describe, in contradistinction to the others, as the non-dangerous big game of India, many of which I have shot from time to time during my long service in that country.

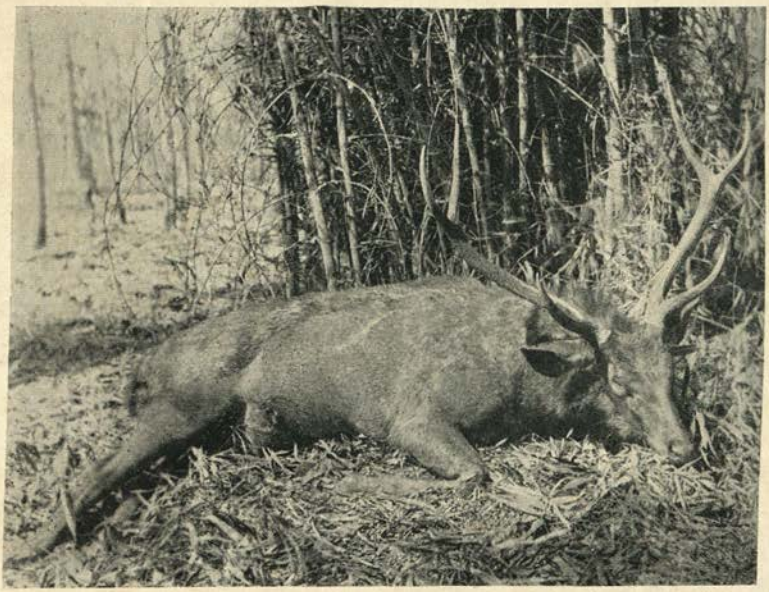
Of these the first, both in point of size and importance, is the sambar.* This handsome animal, called erroneously by some the Indian elk—for he is in fact the red deer—is the largest of all deer, with the exception of the wapili and moose. The stag stands about fourteen hands and weighs from 300 to 600 pounds. In colour it is dark brown, and the throat is surrounded by a shaggy mane which gives a striking appearance to the animal. The horns are not palmated, but antlers, with two lines only, four feet or more in length, and usually indented with deep notches or grooves.

The females are lighter in colour and have no horns. They live together in small herds of about five or six, and frequent wooded ravines and jungles preferably in rocky and mountainous country.

In hot weather the male almost always lives up in very

* *Cervus Unicolar.*

CHETUL OR SPOTTED DEER.
(Khandesh.)



A SAMBAR. [*To face p.* 92.
(Central Provinces.)

high ground and his large footmarks or tracks are often found in almost inaccessible places.

A male sambar's presence in the jungle can be easily detected from a habit they have of rubbing themselves against trees to get rid of the velvet that adheres to their horns up to the mating season. The old stags can generally be heard bellowing at dark and early dawn. These animals afford excellent sport, though naturally it is not so exciting as the pursuit of dangerous game. A good head makes a fine trophy, and the skin is of some value, as out of it can be made excellent shooting boots and gaiters, being soft and pliable yet proof against thorns.

The swamp deer or bara-sing * comes next in point of size, and is found in Central and also other parts of India. It is a grand animal and much resembles the red deer of Scotland in appearance, and is about the same size. Its horns, though not so massive, are far handsomer than those of the sambar, and carry from ten to twelve points. Though I have shot a good many of these animals, I was never fortunate enough to secure a really good head.

Next comes the spotted deer, or chetul,† an animal which, in my opinion, is, without exception, the most beautiful and graceful of the deer tribe. The stag is a little larger than a fallow buck; its skin is of a rich dark-brown colour, completely covered with white spots and almost as handsome as that of a panther; the belly and inside of the thighs are pure white. Like the sambar, the antlers have only six lines, and vary in length from thirty to forty inches.

Chetul are usually found in thick jungles on the banks of rivers where the country is broken, and intersected by deep ravines and watercourses; they go about in large herds of fifty to sixty, and are very common in the Central Provinces, where I have shot a great number.

Like all the deer tribe, they are extremely shy, and therefore difficult to approach. If alarmed, they make a peculiar noise—a loud, harsh bark, repeated at intervals of a minute, often denoting the presence of a tiger or panther in the jungles.

When encamped on the banks of the river at Ghorisgaon,

* *Cervus Duvancelli.* † *Cervus Axis.*

in Khandesh, herds of these deer used often to come down to drink close to our tents, but were seldom molested for fear of disturbing more important game.

A much smaller member of the deer tribe is the ribbed face or barking deer,* an extraordinary little creature of a reddish-brown colour, the longitudinal creased ridges on the face and hoarse bark giving to it the names it bears. It stands about two feet high and is very low in the shoulder. The antlers, which are supported on long, skin-covered pedicles, divide at the top into two small trees, the tops curving curiously backwards and are from two to five inches long. Another peculiarity of this animal is the length of its tongue; its teeth, too, are extremely long.

Another curious animal is the mouse deer,† or pisdi, about the size of a hare. It is of a dirty yellow grey colour, white underneath, with long rows of spots running lengthways along the side, and large brown ears. The tiny footprints of these animals—V-shaped and split at the points—are often seen along the jungle paths. They are excellent eating and remind one of the Sakaro or Dik-Dik of Africa.

In Central India and Sind, also in parts of Lower Bengal, are found the hog deer ‡ or para. I have shot many in Sind, where they are very common. They stand about twenty-five inches at the shoulder and are of a rufous or yellowish-brown colour. Their horns resemble those of a sambar or chetul in shape, though naturally much smaller, rarely exceeding sixteen inches in length; the hide, like that of sambar, is soft and pliant yet thorn-proof, and is much used for making saddle covers, gaiters, etc.

This, to the best of my belief, completes the list of all the known varieties of the deer tribe to be found in the Indian jungles. There are some other animals closely resembling deer, but which in fact are really antelopes, an account of which, together with the wild goat or ibex, will be found in the next chapter.

* *Invus Aurtus.* † *Memimna Indica.* ‡ *Axis Porcenus.*

CHAPTER XIII

Indian antelope—Black buck the best known—Where found—Description—Habits, etc.—Rifle recommended—The Indian gazelle—The gazelle or chinkara—Its peculiar call—The four-horned antelope—Flesh uneatable—The Nil Ghi—Meaning of the name—Ibex or wild goat of Asia Minor—A stalk described—Rolling down a precipice—Ibex-driving in Afghanistan—Posted to Sholapur—No big game—Pig-sticking—The sport described—A comparison—A boar described—Its formidable weapon—How used—Riding for first spear—Keen competition—The pig-sticking spear—Spears used in Bombay and Madras—The short spear of Bengal—Blades—Varieties in shape of—Horses best suited for the sport—Cunning of the boar—Its courage and determination—A formidable foe—Some runs described—The secret of success—Full speed a necessity—A sport *sui generis*—I lose a favourite terrier from hydrophobia—Two servants bitten—Apparently none the worse—A tragic sequel—Both men die of hydrophobia—No clue as to how the dog was bitten—The danger of owning pugnacious terriers—Village curs dangerous to fight with.

Of the Indian antelope, of which I have any personal knowledge, the one best known to all Indian sportsmen is the black buck,* to be found practically all over India, but more frequently in dry districts, where they frequent large open plains more or less devoid of vegetation.

An old buck stands about two feet nine inches high. His coat is black as pitch, in strong contrast with the pure white markings on the belly, face, and throat. The skin darkens with age and does not attain its maximum colour till the animal is about eight years old.

The horns are spiral, generally of equal length, and vary in size from nineteen to twenty-seven and a half inches. The females are smaller than the male, of a light-fawn colour, and carry no horns.

The black buck is gregarious and generally found in herds of twenty or thirty individuals, though on the plains of Gujerat I have seen as many as two hundred in a herd. Old bucks are very pugnacious and may frequently be

* *Antelope Bezoartica.*

seen fighting, and when so engaged can be easily approached. Essentially a plain-loving animal, it avoids hills and heavy jungles. They are capable of great speed, and when disturbed, start off with high leaps and bounds. Like all antelope they are extremely shy and difficult to stalk.

A ·400 Express is the best weapon to use with these animals. I have shot a large number, but was not fortunate in securing any good heads, the longest being twenty-three and a quarter inches.

The Indian gazelle * is another of the antelope tribe, standing about two feet two or three inches in height, and of a dark-red chestnut colour. Its horns run from ten to fourteen inches in the male ; the longest pair in my collection are twelve and a half inches. They are ringed and with very sharp points. The does also carry horns, but they are smoother and only about six inches long.

The gazelle, or chinkara, as they are now often called, frequent broken ground with sandy ravines bordered by scrub jungle, and are very common in Gujerat, Khandesh, and the Central Provinces. They are generally in small herds of four or five, with one or two bucks amongst them, and sometimes may be found singly.

The chinkara is a restless little creature and requires good shooting, for they do not offer much of a mark. When alarmed they make a peculiar hissing sound like a loud sneeze. The venison of this animal is excellent eating.

Then comes the four-horned antelope,† which is found throughout India, except, I believe, in Burmah and Ceylon. They are common in Khandesh and in parts of the Central Provinces. The male is of a dull-brown colour and stands about twenty-five inches at the shoulders. The anterior horns of this animal are seldom more than two inches in length, while the posterior do not exceed four inches. The does are of a lighter colour and have no horns.

These animals are extremely shy and are generally found in small herds of five or six and sometimes singly. When alarmed they run with necks held low which gives them a peculiar poky appearance. Their flesh is coarse and uneatable.

* *Gazella Bennettii.* † *Tetraceros Quædricornis.*

Finally, there is the nilghi,* a name presumably given it originally by the natives on account of its appearance, "nil" being the Hindustani for "blue," and "ghi" meaning a "cow." I know very little of this animal, which, though classed as an antelope, more resembles a deer without horns, though the bull has short horns of about nine inches.

It is of a decidedly blue-grey colour and about the size of a sambar. It is found in various parts of India, but in Bengal is hardly considered as game, because, owing to its docile and confiding disposition, it affords no real sport and is consequently seldom hunted. A solitary bull will give a good run at times.

When shooting in Baluchistan I was very fortunate in procuring some very fine specimens of the ibex, or wild goat,† of Asia Minor. This animal is about the size of a small donkey and of much the same colour, being of a brownish-grey, with an almost black line down the back.

The males have long beards and horns of the usual ibex type, but differ from those of the various species in that they have no distinct front surface—only notches, these being irregular and some distance apart. In some of the animals the horns curve inwards at the tips, whilst in others the curve is outwards, those with the latter formation being the most prized.

The females are lighter in colour than the male and have small horns and no beard.

The wild goat is found singly or in herds of from ten to twenty. They inhabit lofty mountain ranges, and as with all the ibex tribe are extremely shy and very difficult to approach.

I well remember once in Sind following the track of a solitary ibex for over thirty miles along a mountain path, which lead so persistently upwards that even my wild Baluchi shikari showed signs of giving in.

We plodded along, however, and just as the day was waning, sighted our quarry some fifty yards ahead of us. There was little or no cover, and as we sank down, scarcely daring to breathe, the ibex threw up his head and looked

* *Boselephos Tragocamelus.* † *Capra hircuslelythi.*

fixedly at us. Presently he gave a stamp with his foot, and I knew we were discovered, and that there was not a moment to lose, so, sitting up, I covered his chest, and taking a careful aim as if I was competing for a £1000 prize, I fired.

The ibex gave a great leap upwards and fell over, dead. He was a splendid beast, very old and scarred all over, and the horns measured forty-eight and a half inches round the curve. We were well satisfied with our prize; but it was many hours past sundown when we reached our camp, at the foot of the mountains, thoroughly done up, and with every bone in our bodies aching after our tremendous climb.

On another occasion an ibex I had wounded crawled up a rocky precipice, some three thousand feet high, where it was impossible to follow him. With my powerful field-glasses I had just made out he was badly wounded—the bullet wound on his shoulder being distinctly visible—when suddenly he gave a lurch forward, and, looking no larger than an orange, came rolling down to the valley below.

On going up to him I was mortified to find, however, that in his rapid, but probably involuntary descent, one of his magnificent horns had been broken off at the point. Nevertheless he was a fine specimen, the horns measuring forty-six and a half inches round the curve.

So far as I know, ibex shooting in India is always done in the way I have described. In Persia and Afghanistan, however, I believe they are generally shot in drives, but this must be poor sport.

* * * * *

In the year —— my services in the Khandesh District were interrupted for a while by my transfer, as District Superintendent of Police, to the District of Sholapur, where, though the work was much easier than at Khandesh, there was no big-game shooting. However, small game was fairly plentiful, but what I most enjoyed was the pig-sticking, a sport for which the district was quite celebrated in those days, and probably is still.

Although hog-hunting, or pig-sticking—to give it its more familiar title—is not to be classed with big-game shooting, it is considered, and justly so, the finest sport in

the world. The dash of danger intermingled with the excitement of the chase gives to it a zest which, even in fox-hunting, is wanting.

At the same time, in some respects the two resemble each other closely, in fact, to put it briefly, pig-sticking less the hounds, is fox-hunting, except for the difference in size and character of the two animals respectively concerned, but this difference is important, for whilst the fox is helpless to protect itself, the pig can, and often does, turn on its pursuers, and being a formidable beast, the contest is infinitely more equal, sometimes even resulting in victory for the pursued.

In this connection it is necessary to bear in mind, too, that this—the so-called "pig"—is invariably a boar, of all wild animals in India admittedly the most determined and courageous, armed, moreover, with sharp tusks, averaging from five to six inches long, though they have been known to run to as much as nine inches in length.

For the rest, an Indian boar stands over two feet six inches and from snout to end of tail is quite six feet in length. In colour he is almost black with a thick row of long, stout bristles down the back. The head is long and narrow with coarse black flowing whiskers, which turn grey with age. The ears are pointed and surrounded with black bristles.

Of the tusks alluded to above, he carries four, an upper and lower one each side of his mouth; but it is the lower ones he uses in attack or defence. These are white and gleaming and symmetrically curved with the inner edges as sharp as a razor.

His method of using these murderous weapons, is to throw up his head with a jerk when closing with his foe, and having great power in his neck, a blow thus delivered makes a fearful wound. The upper tusks are much shorter and of a dirty yellow colour. His tail is scantily covered with short hairs, and has a flat tuft of bristles at the end.

Wild pig are found throughout India and are very common in the Deccan, where I have speared a considerable number. They do much damage to the crops and live in herds or sounders—to use the technical term—of from ten to sixty or more. Solitary boars are occasionally to be met

with in high grass, cactus bushes, or rocky caves, and afford the best sport.

When riding in company with others, the main object of the hunters is to obtain the "first spear," *i.e.* to be the first to stick the pig, for the rider who draws first blood, however slight the wound he inflicts, is entitled to the tusks, hence the competition for these trophies is naturally very keen.

In the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, where the weapon is held lance-wise, the long spear is invariably used, varying in length from eight to ten feet, but in Bengal a short leaden-headed, jobbing spear is preferred. The shafts of all pig-sticking spears are made of what is known as the male bamboo, which for strength and rigidity cannot be surpassed.

The spear-head, or blade, varies in shape according to the taste and experience of the hunter, but the lance-shaped blade is to be preferred as it is easier to draw out of the boar after the thrust has been delivered.

The horses best suited for the sport are Arab stallions, as they are extremely courageous and very clever on their feet—an important qualification, for the boar usually selects the worst line of country in his flight, in the hopes of shaking off his pursuers.

In following a boar, the rider must be ever on the alert, ready for any contingency that may arise, for no one who has not been an eye-witness of the desperate courage of the wild hog, would believe in the utter recklessness of life which he displays, or in the fierceness of his attack.

With a spear passed through his vitals, he has been known to bury his tusks in the body of a horse, or the leg of its rider. He is none the less a noble foe, rarely turning to mutilate a fallen enemy; unless so desperately wounded as to be unable to go on, and when conquered, dies, as only a wild hog can die, in absolute silence.

On one occasion, I had a long and severe run after a solitary old boar, which on the second time of being speared, ran up the spear and fixed its tusks in the chest of my horse, bringing him heavily to the ground. I was picked up insensible and with a broken collar-bone!

Another time when riding for the spear, with my friend

O—— of the Indian Civil Service, my horse was knocked completely off his legs by a savage boar. As a result of the encounter I was laid up for several days with broken ribs, while my horse was so badly ripped that it had to be destroyed!

The secret of riding a hog successfully is to ride as close up to him as possible, keeping him on the right or spear side. The horse must be kept so thoroughly in hand as to be able to turn at once with every "jink" or turn made by the pig.

The pace of the horse, too, should be as near as possible at full speed, in order to blow the pig and take away his wind in the first brunt, otherwise he will probably run for miles, hence if either from the slowness of the horse, or the difficulties of the ground, the pace cannot be kept up, there is always the danger of losing the pig.

It would take pages to describe all the various incidents, accidents, and adventures which fall to the lot of all who have ridden after pig, for it is a sport eminently *sui generis*, and one in which the sportsman, while exposed to every danger attendant on fox-hunting, must also run the risk of being attacked by the animal hunted. Nevertheless, it is just this spice of danger which, as I have said already, gives to this sport its extraordinary fascination.

While stationed at Sholapur, I had the misfortune to lose a very favourite dog, a fox-terrier called Snap, but under circumstances which had such an extraordinarily tragic sequel, that I am tempted to record this otherwise, apparently, trivial incident.

On arrival one morning, while on tour, at a new camping ground, my butler brought me the dead body of the dog, who, as usual, had been sent ahead with the camp kit, under the charge of the dog-boy. I examined the body and found some foam and saliva round the mouth.

The butler explained that the dog, who was travelling in the cart with the servants, had suddenly become restless, and finally had bitten the dog-boy and the dhoby,* and becoming very violent, they had been obliged to kill him. Neither of the two persons bitten seemed any the worse,

* Washerman.

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nor were their injuries severe; however, thinking it safer to do so, I cauterised all the bites I could find on both as thoroughly as I could, and gave no further thought to the matter.

Six months later, however, after I had left the district, a friend at Sholapur, to whom I had mentioned the incident, wrote to tell me that both the dhoby and the dog-boy had just died of hydrophobia! The curious part of this business was that I could never discover when, where, or how the dog had contracted the dread disease himself; and could only conclude that he, being like most terriers, exceedingly pugnacious, had been bitten, when fighting with some village cur, which had the germs in him.

SNAKE-CHARMER WITH LIVE COBRA.

[*To face p.* 102.

CHAPTER XIV

A lack of amusement—Fishing on the lake—Good sport—Snake charming—A performance described—"Music hath charms"—Discordant but fascinating—Lured out of a well—A marvellous performance—Removing poisonous fangs—The hamadryad—Its rapidity of movement—A friend's experience—Hatching the eggs—A male mother—The nest found—A rare specimen—The insatiable collector—The biter bit—The snake stone—Method of using it—The cure effected—An heirloom—Purging the stone—A narrow escape—Rough on the fishing-rod—A snake in the hall—Prompt measures—Taking the bull by the horns—A strange protest—Posted to Shikapur—Its evil reputation—The hottest place in India—How we kept cool at night—Sand-flies and mosquitoes—Sand storms—No regular rainfall—A change to Sukkur—Cold weather, short and severe—Wild fowl in plenty—Pleasant days at Khairpur—An old-time chieftain—A sportsman over seventy—Wild shooting—Ali Murad and his falcons—A day's hawking—Well-trained birds—An old reprobate—Curious way of fishing.

APART from pig-sticking and small-game shooting, there was little in the way of amusement at Sholapur, but as the station boasted of rather a good lake, we rigged up a boat and for some time amused ourselves with sailing.

However, discovering after a while, that there were fish in the lake, we used the boat for fishing; the fish we found, though small, were very plentiful and good eating, and what is more to the point, gave excellent sport with a fly.

It was while at Sholapur, too, that I witnessed some curious feats of snake-charming, performed by a wandering gang of professional snake-charmers. The principal performer was an individual of the native juggler type, who, to the weird music of a reed instrument, which he called a "phunghi," made several cobras, which he brought with him, sway and keep time to, what by courtesy might be called the tune, which, however, seemed to have an extraordinary fascination for the snakes, for they were

evidently entranced by it and for the time being completely under control.

Afterwards, by means of this discordant "music," he lured out of a disused well another cobra, which, unless he had previously placed it there himself, which was scarcely possible, was certainly not one of his own.

This one he also played to for a time, and with the same effect, then, suddenly grasping it by the tail, and running his hand up rapidly, grasped it below the neck and forcing its jaws open, extracted its two poison fangs, using a pair of pincers for the purpose.

It was certainly a marvellous performance and one requiring extraordinary skill and courage, as the slightest mistake, or fumbling, would have cost the man his life, for the snake, as we had seen, was dangerous at the time.

With many so-called snake-charmers, who perform their tricks with what are believed to be poisonous snakes, it is the practice to have the poisonous fangs extracted beforehand, and though they grow again, for the time being they make it harmless.

Writing about snakes reminds me of an amusing adventure experienced by W——, a friend of mine at Castle-rock, a wild, delightful spot in the Western Ghats, one of the few remaining haunts of the common hamadryad snakes.

The hamadryad is a very large species of poisonous snake, most venomous, and so swift in its movements as to have won for itself the somewhat incredible reputation of being able to coil itself into a hoop for the purpose of chasing its victim with greater rapidity.

W——, when out on one occasion in the jungle after big game, was told by the beaters that a pair of hamadryads were hatching some eggs in another jungle close by. The male is said, like the ostrich, to take its share in this performance.

Great precaution was necessary in order that they might be approached unobserved, as they are supposed to attack, if disturbed, on the slightest provocation. However, they managed to get near, and W——, catching sight of the male, promptly shot it, then offered a reward to any one who could show him the whereabouts of the

nest. A few days later a shikari found the place and escorted him there, when W——, shooting the female too, secured the eggs.

Delighted with his find, he carefully packed up the dead snake and her eggs, which were nearly hatched, and dispatched the parcel to a friend, a well-known naturalist in Bombay, who would, no doubt, as he imagined, be most grateful for so interesting an addition to his collection.

But, not being a naturalist himself, nor aware of the voracity of their kind in the matter of specimens, he had, as it appeared, over-estimated the value of his contribution, for in the course of a week or so he received a letter from his friend reproaching him indignantly for sending him " a few eggs and a dead snake, when he might so easily have captured and sent him the whole family alive ! "

He evidently meant to imply that my friend should have waited until the eggs were hatched, and then to make a wholesale capture of the parents and their progeny, but how two such deadly reptiles—to say nothing of the little ones possibly as venomous—were to be caught, he did not trouble to explain.

Strangely enough, this enthusiastic collector, who, by the way, was much liked and respected by all, eventually fell a victim to this mania for collecting such dangerous specimens, for some time afterwards he was bitten, and lost his life through handling some venomous snakes in his collection in Bombay.

Another friend of mine, H——, an Indian civilian, was once witness to a somewhat interesting incident in which one of his men was bitten by a cobra. I venture to relate this because it is one of the very few authenticated cases of a cure being effected by the snake-stone, of which many have doubtless heard, but apparently few believe in.

The friend in question was seated in his verandah one morning, when one of his servants came running up to him, exclaiming that he had just been bitten by a snake and showed two marks on his ankle, which after careful examination seemed to have undoubtedly been made by the fangs of a snake.

Meanwhile, some peons and others had chased and killed the snake, which proved to be a large and almost

black cobra, the most venomous of the species. Every one was naturally much alarmed, and, including the victim himself, prepared for the worst, for there was no cure or antidote known of in those days.

The man soon showed symptoms of the poison, and had already become drowsy, when some religious mendicants, happening to pass along the road near the bungalow, saw the dead snake, which had been thrown there, and questioning the servants, ascertained what had happened.

They now came into the compound, asking to be allowed to see and cure the bitten man, and this request being granted, one of them unswathed his turban and undoing a knot in it, extracted a small blue green stone of a somewhat spongy appearance. Wetting this with spittle, he rubbed it on the wounds, at the same time making passes and uttering certain incantations. He repeated this performance three times, then informed the patient, who certainly seemed better, that he would be quite all right now and free from all effects of the poison.

He then proceeded to tie up his treasured talisman, and making his salaams, was going off, when my friend, who had been much interested in this proceeding, engaged him in conversation with a view to finding out what was the composition, etc., of the stone, and finally asked him whether he would sell it.

But this he absolutely declined to do, declaring it was an heirloom, handed down from many generations, nor would he permit the stone to be touched by any one. Finally, accepting a small reward, he went off with the rest of his companions. Meanwhile, the man bitten had been rapidly improving, and in a short time was perfectly well!

Doubtless the virtue of these stones lies in the fact of their being porous and strongly absorbent, thus, when placed against a snake-fang puncture, gradually draw off all the poison. This, at any rate, is the generally accepted explanation of the native superstition, which attribute to these stones a mysteriously miraculous power brought into operation only by passes and incantations such as I have described.

I have since heard that Faquirs and others who make a

practice of using these stones as snake-bite curers, surreptitiously soak them in milk, after each operation, to purge them of the poison they have absorbed so as to be fit to use again, but how far this is true I cannot say.

Although it is not often that Europeans are exposed to any danger from snakes, I had once a very narrow escape from one myself.

Coming out one morning from my bath, I sat down at the dressing-table and stretching out my legs underneath it, I felt something cold under my feet, both of which were bare. Looking down, I discovered to my horror that one foot was resting on a coiled-up snake.

Luckily, I had the presence of mind to move the foot gently away, and seizing the nearest weapon I could find, which unfortunately happened to be my best fishing-rod, I struck at the beast, which was fortunately somewhat lethargic, either from a full meal or the cold. I smashed the rod to pieces, but seemed to make little impression on the snake, which was finally finished off by my orderly, who hearing the disturbance came to my assistance. The snake proved to be a cobra. I had thus every reason to be thankful for my escape.

The only other case I remember of Europeans being exposed to danger from snakes was of a man who, with his wife and children, was staying with a friend. Coming in from shooting one day, he saw a huge snake in the hall close to where his children were playing. Slipping a cartridge into his gun, he promptly shot it, and only then discovered that it was a harmless rock snake that he had killed. However, as it is always safer to assume that all Indian snakes are dangerous, this fact did not trouble him, and when he met his host he told him what had happened, but to his amazement, the latter, so far from expressing any regret for the anxiety he had suffered, was most indignant, and reproached him for, what he was pleased to describe, his inhumanity in killing a harmless snake!

Too angry at the moment to reply, he waited till he felt calmer, then asked if he would kindly tell him how he could have ascertained whether the snake was harmless or not,

adding that another time it would perhaps be better to examine a snake's fangs before shooting it!

* * * * *

My next station was Shikarpur, which enjoys the evil reputation of being, during the hot season, the hottest place in India. In fact, by those who have experienced its fiery climate, it has often been described as "rivalling, in their estimation, a certain warmer spot below, and only separated from it by a sheet of thin brown paper."

How far this comparison may be true, I am, fortunately, not in a position to say, but judging from my knowledge of places on the *surface* of the earth, it is quite the warmest I have been in. And apparently the Government is of the same opinion, for all officials posted there receive a compensation allowance of Rs.100 a month as extra pay.

The houses, too, are all built with thick mud walls and have flat tops which are used at night to sleep on, and even then it is only by sprinkling the bed from time to time with water, and having a punkah overhead, that it is possible to obtain a few hours' sleep.

Some, indeed, go so far as to have a tub of water near the bed to plunge into occasionally; another drawback, too, are the sand-flies which, numerous and persistent as mosquitoes, are a perfect pest.

There is no regular rainfall, but the vegetation is maintained by a system of irrigation and the occasional overflowing of the Indus river. A sandstorm at rare intervals somewhat cools the atmosphere, but during the hot weather we put in as much time as we could spare at Sukkur on the Indus, where the cooler breezes of the river made life somewhat more tolerable.

Strangely enough, though, in spite of their hot dry climate, the gardens, both at Shikarpur and Sukkur, are exceptionally flourishing, full of the graceful date and palms, and other tropical trees.

The cold weather, though short, is quite severe, and during this season excellent small-game shooting can be had, especially at a place called Larkhana, where, on the numerous tanks, there are wild fowl in plenty and snipe also near the banks. Quail and partridge, too, are plentiful, including the black and handsome variety of

ALI MURAD, CHIEF OF KHAIRPUR.
(Baluchistan.)

[*To face p.* 108.

IBEX.
(Baluchistan.)

MY FINEST KOODOO BULL. [*To face p.* 109.

the latter, which, together with the chakoor, are also to be found.

There is no big game in the district except the ibex, a wild goat of Asia Minor, which I have described in a previous chapter.

While stationed at Shikarpur, I spent some pleasant days with Ali Murad, the chief of Khairpur, who, though over seventy years of age then, was an exceedingly good sportsman and magnificent shot. He had excellent reserves well stocked with wild hogs and hog deer.

These were driven out by a multitude of beaters past the guns, and, by the chief and his followers, fired at indiscriminately, no quarter being given to the pigs. However, except the chief himself, who rarely missed a shot, the shooting of his entourage was exceedingly, not to say dangerously, wild, their bullets being heard whistling in all directions but the right one.

We also had a day out with Ali Murad's falcons, which we followed on horseback. They were wonderfully trained birds, and it was a very pretty sight to see their flight after hare and partridge, and to watch the curious manner in which they were lured back, but, on the whole, the sport was not one that appealed to me.

The ancient chieftain was a ruler of the old-fashioned autocratic type, and the hero of numerous interesting adventures, which, unfortunately, it would not be diplomatic to repeat. He was much pleased at a photo I took of him.

One of the most curious things I noticed while at Shikarpur was the manner in which fishing is done on the Indus. The fisherman lies on his stomach extended on a large earthen "chatty," and thus drifts down the stream, holding a conical-shaped net in front of him. Then as the fish are secured, they are slipped into the chatty, which when full he guides to the shore. The principal fish is the pullah, which is very bony, but makes excellent eating.

CHAPTER XV

After furlough—Posted to Bijapur—A city of the dead—Tomb as official residence—Mosque with whispering gallery—A dome larger than St. Paul's—My tomb-house—Its advantages and drawbacks—Plague and famine—My next station—The sacred city of Nasik—On plague duty—High-handedness and extortion—Discontent—Riot and murder—Victims of the plague—Dacoities and sedition—Police measures—A robber chief—His formidable gang—Baffles the police—A Police Post attacked—Pursuit—A havildar and his men killed—Vengeance on a spy—Organize a flying column—The robber stronghold stormed—Desperate resistance—Heavy casualties on both sides—Capture of ring-leader and his gang—Treasure recovered—A fine body of men—A wounded robber chief in hospital—Some startling revelations—A sporting ruffian—Sedition in Nasik—Mistaken sympathy from the Press—Trial and conviction of the ring-leaders—Inadequate sentences—Agitation renewed—Manufacture of bombs—Art acquired in Europe by so-called students—Murder of officials—A judge shot in native theatre.

AFTER furlough home and some further service in Khandesh, I found myself posted at that dread city of the dead, Bijapur, where most of the official residences are converted, ancient tombs. This place boasts of a mosque with whispering gallery and dome, the latter said to be larger than St. Paul's, also several other beautiful mosques and tombs.

My particular residence was believed to have been the tomb of two sisters, both famous in their way, but for what, I cannot say. However, owing to the great thickness of the walls, the house, if I may call it so, was fairly cool during the day if kept carefully closed.

In the evening, however, it was quite impossible to sit anywhere near the house, the heat the walls threw off being absolutely unbearable. Plague and famine, too, were both rife in the district at the time, so that altogether my lot was not a happy one.

The only compensation was that black-buck were very

plentiful and the country being open they afforded good sport.

My next station was Nasik, a most interesting, healthy station, and the second most sacred city in India, Trimbak, the source of the river Godavery, being eighteen miles only from Nasik city.

There are particularly good golf links too, and now, I believe, quite a large residential Golf Club. Bombay being about four hours by rail only, and Nasik having a more temperate climate, forms a pleasant retreat for hard-working Bombay men at most times of the year.

I came in, however, for a full share of plague and famine troubles, and the whole district was dotted about with segregation camps. At one time, on account of plague, the whole city had to be evacuated, and it was a melancholy sight to see rows upon rows of empty houses and shops marked, as in the famous plague of London, but with a red Government mark instead of a cross.

Notwithstanding the tremendous efforts made by the numerous civilian and military officers on special plague duty, there is no doubt that a great deal of high-handedness and extortion was exercised by their understrappers in their official dealings with the people.

These official parasites being mostly recruited from the high-caste Brahmins, of whom there are many in Nasik, doubtless made full use of their high social position to aid, as well as cover, their extortionate proceedings, and while acting ostensibly as Government officials, were in fact feathering their own nests. The harvest reaped by some of them was, I know, enormous.

There was also great and grave dissatisfaction at many of the orders issued by Government, some of which were much abused. This discontent, in fact, gave rise to local disturbances, culminating in a serious riot, in which the camp of the plague doctor was burnt and his assistant and several others killed.

Plague, like cholera and enteric, is now generally accepted as one of the ills of India, but I doubt if the world at large realizes for a moment how many millions of deaths it is accountable for. Some are of opinion that if when the pestilence first started the whole infected area had been

burnt down and the inhabitants completely segregated, it might probably have been nipped in the bud and many lives thus saved.

So far as my own police force was concerned, I lost annually many invaluable men as well as my own servants, my favourite shikari, Gungdia, being one of the many victims to the fell disease.

I found the Nasik District very bad, too, in the matter of dacoities and sedition. The first of these two evils occupied the whole attention of myself and neighbouring superintendents of police throughout the year, for there were many difficulties to contend with, not the least of them being due to the hills which, dividing the districts from each other, afforded shelter to the dacoits. Thus when the police pursuit became too pressing in one district, the individuals pursued could easily evade it by slipping over the border into these hills where they lay concealed.

There was considerable emulation between the police of the different districts for the capture of the absconders, but this very keenness was often the cause of their failure, for each being desirous of effecting the capture preferred acting alone to seeking assistance from the other, thus losing the benefit of co-operation, which is so essential in police work.

Many a dacoit slipped through our fingers in this way, and, as times became harder, were joined by other bad characters; eventually becoming quite a formidable gang under the leadership of one Chimanya Bowani, a typical robber-chieftain whose fine physique and haughty bearing supported his claim to being of Rajput blood. Under his able guidance the gang soon became quite strong enough to hold up the principal roads and thoroughfares in the district, and finally established what might be described as a reign of terror throughout the countryside.

Special police were employed to hunt the gang, and large Government rewards offered for the arrest of any of its members, or for information which might lead to this result. Special rewards, too, were offered for the arrest of the leader, but so much was he feared that it was difficult even to obtain any news of his movements, and

though he was seen once or twice, and fired at by the police, he always managed to escape.

The failure of the rains for two consecutive seasons causing famine, had produced great distress which, added to the presence and rapacity of the professional money-lenders, was the primary cause of these dacoities; hence there was something to be said in favour of the robbers, many of whom having been ruined by these men, had become criminals by necessity rather than of their own free will.

But be this as it may, their depredations soon assumed very serious proportions, for within a very few weeks no less than one hundred and sixty dacoities, accompanied with murder, had been committed by this gang, who, armed with swords and bows, were too powerful to be resisted by the villagers. They generally mutilated their victims, especially if they happened to be money-lenders, by cutting off their ears and noses or otherwise disfiguring them beyond recognition.

At length, not content with plundering villages, Chimanya and his followers now attacked a police post on the frontier, and seizing the rifles and ammunition they found there, made off with them. Thoroughly acquainted with all the hill paths and rocky chasms of the border, they easily evaded subsequent pursuit by the police, who, moreover, were considerably handicapped by heavy rain.

I well remember the occasion and the discomforts I experienced during this pursuit, being frequently washed out of my tents; also the exhilaration of my assistant on finding our dining-table just long enough to sleep under, and so protect him from the stream that poured through the roof of the shanty in which we once took shelter. The chase on this occasion ended in failure, for many of the patels or headmen of the villages we passed, fearing reprisals, would give no information of the movements of the absconders, though, as we learnt later, they had supplied them with food and drink.

Moreover, to guard against arrest, the gang kept continuously on the move, changing their encampment every day, and were perpetually on the alert, mounting regular sentries wherever they encamped; so that, on the whole,

the police, as is the case with all disciplined forces, operating in an unknown country and against a mobile foe, were at a considerable disadvantage.

At length, however, we thought our chance had come when one day a deserter from the enemy's camp came to the police and offered his services as an informer; but, as it turned out, this merely added to our difficulties, for while he was being taken to the magistrate's camp, the escort was attacked by the gang, who, killing the havildar in command and two constables, carried him off with them.

We found the body of the poor wretch later, tied to a tree, but minus the head, which had been cut off and stuck on a pole as a warning to any villagers who might be disposed to act as he had done!

Finally, things came to such a pass that, in spite of extra men being supplied to each district force, it was found that the police were insufficient, and it was decided to reinforce them by a detachment of infantry from Poonah. Before these arrived, however, I had organized a flying column of fifty picked men under a smart, reliable inspector, each man carrying sixty rounds of ammunition and provided with provisions for a month, so as to be independent of the villagers, who, since the summary execution of the informer, were more disinclined than ever to render assistance to the police.

The pursuit was resumed without delay, and in the course of a few days the stronghold of the gang in these hills was discovered and surrounded. They made a desperate resistance, fighting with great courage and desperation, but in the end many were killed, wounded, and captured, including the chief, whom we found the next day hiding in a field, where he lay wounded.

We also recovered a quantity of treasure, consisting of bags of rupees, gold and silver ornaments, etc., all of which were found lying—flung here and there about the camp—amongst the mud and puddles, for it had been raining heavily before and during the encounter.

Our loss was heavy too, the inspector being wounded and several men killed. However, we had the satisfaction of feeling that the gang was now thoroughly broken up,

a fact acknowledged by the Government in several gratifying telegrams, and a subsequent resolution, winding up with the bestowal of a sword of honour to the inspector in recognition of his services.

Meanwhile the military had arrived, all as keen as they could be, thinking they were in for a real sporting time, and were consequently greatly disappointed to find the "show" was over, for a dacoit hunt would have been a pleasant break in the monotony of their life in cantonments.

Amongst the captured members of the gang were many of very fine physique, whom I much regretted being unable to enlist in my corps, and who would doubtless have made excellent military policemen, if only on the principle of "Set a thief to catch a thief."

I had many conversations with the Chief Chimanya while he was in hospital. Among many other things, he told me he had no enmity against Europeans, as they had never done him any harm, which I thought was rather sporting of him, seeing that it was to them he really owed his wounds and final downfall!

He also informed me—much to my humiliation—that on several occasions during the pursuit, both myself and my assistant as well as some of my men had met and asked his own scouts—disguised as rustics—the way to his stronghold! also that on one occasion my assistant was talking to one of their men, quite innocent of the fact that there were several of the gang concealed close to the spot, who could have shot him quite easily had they wished!

But the strangest thing he told me was that "one day he and several of his men were hiding in a ravine close to the public road, when they saw a tonga passing with a mem sahib inside. "He could easily have held it up," he said, "in fact his men wanted to do so, but he would not let them."

Comparing dates later I was astounded to find that the lady in the tonga was my wife on her way to join me in camp! True she had an escort of two sowars with her, but against so many they could scarcely have made an effective defence.

On another occasion they had seen a sowar ride into camp with the pay, quite a large sum of money, on a day

when we had, as he knew well, gone off after him on some false information given by a villager.

So that on the whole—notwithstanding all his faults—Chimanya Bawani was certainly a sportsman in the more general sense of the term. Thus I really felt quite sorry when some time after he and many of his followers were convicted of murder and hanged, for though they deserved their fate, it was, as I have said before, the action of the money-lenders which had driven them to crime.

* * * * * *

Another movement which the police had to contend with was, as I have already mentioned, sedition, an evil infinitely more difficult to deal with than dacoity by reason of its more perfect organization, and the subtlety of the agents employed.

Nasik was always known to be seditious, as could be seen by the insolent attitude of a certain section of the natives, especially those of the younger generation, towards all Europeans. The stringent but necessary Government plague precautions caused widespread inconvenience, and the agitators worked this as a lever to make more trouble for the authorities.

Owing to the misplaced sympathy they evoked from the English Press, and the threatening attitude they assumed, some of the more stringent regulations, which were most necessary, were unfortunately rescinded, with a view doubtless to placate the people, but without success, as will be seen. This was naturally most depressing and discouraging to the officials who were fighting the plague, night and day, European officers actually removing plague corpses themselves as part of their daily routine and sparing no effort to check the progress of the pestilence.

Though the populace seemed satisfied at having gained their ends, there was ample evidence that trouble was seething under this apparently calm surface. The insidious movement was daily gaining power, and gradually, though surely, being disseminated throughout India by the wire-pullers at Nasik.

True, the heads of the movement were ultimately tried and found guilty, but despite the warning of certain experienced officials, who contended that unless severely

dealt with and thus rendered incapable of continuing their propaganda, the men would cause more serious trouble, they were let off with quite inadequate sentences.

The result of this lenient treatment became apparent in due course, for the bomb-throwing, train-wrecking and murder of officials, etc., which occurred later were practically all traced back to these original agitators in Nasik, some of whom, it was found, had made it their business to acquire the art of manufacturing deadly bombs while they were in Europe, ostensibly engaged in studying for examinations.

Of the European officials murdered one was Mr. F——, a judge, who, strangely enough, was remarkable for his leniency to, and sympathy with, the natives, and was actually shot in a native theatre where he had gone with some other Europeans to witness a performance.

CHAPTER XVI

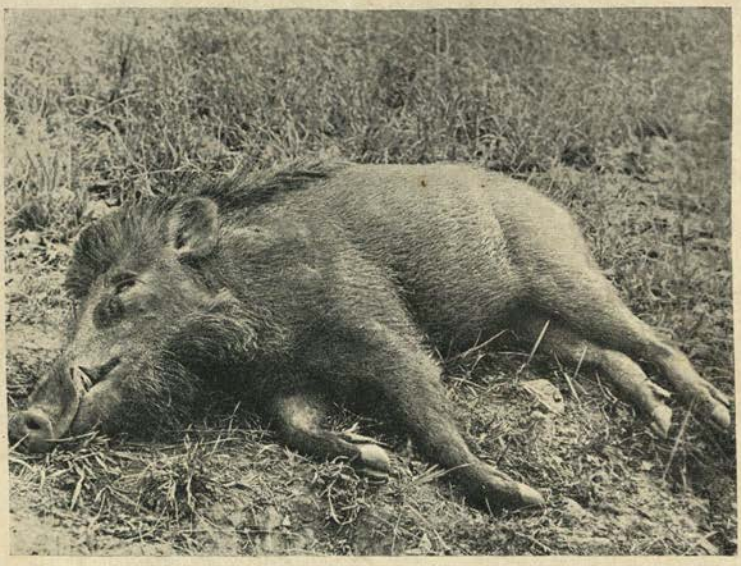
Wild animals as pets—I start a menagerie—Experiments with tiger and panther cubs—Hunting by scent or sight and hearing?—A much-vexed question practically decided—Conclusive evidence—"Billy," my tiger cub—Pillow fights with tiger cubs—The dog-boy and his charges—A troublesome pair—Gymkhana for the police—Bicycles supersede horses—Revisit Khandesh—A hunting box—Old friends—Shooting under difficulties—Blank days—A tiger at last reported—The beat—A tiger and tigress put up—Charging the beaters—Situation becomes dangerous—Rescuing the stops—The beat abandoned for the night—Disappointment—Nasik antiquities—Traffic in curios—Made in Birmingham—Transferred to Dharwar—Shooting off ladders—An accident near ending in a tragedy—Fit only for a madhouse—An interesting temple—The god Khundobar—Said to have been a sportsman—Hunting with the hounds—Worshippers assume attitude and character of dogs—Feeding the dog-devotees—On all fours—Biting and barking—A repulsive and degrading exhibition—Backsheesh the main object.

ALTHOUGH my time while stationed at Nasik was mostly taken up, as I have shown, with dacoities and sedition, I managed to find leisure for other occupations, including the collecting of live wild animals as pets, and in time had quite a respectable menagerie, amongst these, a chetul, a black-buck, two small gazelle, and also panther and tiger cubs.

Interested as I have always been in wild animals of every kind, I have closely watched their habits, in their own jungle, as far as possible, but more particularly when I have had them as pets, and in the case of tigers and leopards, have tried many experiments with the young of both, with a view to settling the much-vexed question as to whether these carnivora hunt by scent or primarily by sight and hearing.

As it occurred to me that the surest way of deciding this was to try the cubs with flesh, I used to drag pieces of

A SHOOTING CAMP. [*To face p.* 118.



THE INDIAN BOAR.

APPROACHING TIGERHOOD. [*To face p.* 119.
"Billy" the Cub.

high meat along the floor, then hide them in various corners of the room, but in spite of all encouragement I never succeeded in inducing the cubs to take up the scent. On the other hand, carefully watching their demeanour, I noticed that they rarely appeared to be scenting, but were always keenly watching and listening.

This, to my mind, is conclusive evidence that the tiger and panther hunt by sight and hearing rather than by smell. In support of which theory there is, I think, circumstantial evidence too, for I firmly believe if such destructive beasts as these were capable of hunting by scent, there would be no other animal left alive in any jungle they frequented. Amongst the tiger cubs I have kept from time to time as pets was one "Billy," shown in the accompanying photo, who, for a tiger cub, was particularly affectionate and docile. He died of paralysis of the spine, a very frequent cause of death with such animals in captivity.

Two other tiger cubs I had were about the size of spaniels and a most amusing pair they were. They used to run loose in my tent and in the morning shared my early breakfast. At times their play was apt to be rather too rough, and I have frequently been obliged to drive them off by flooring them with a pillow or bolster.

They used to sleep on each side of my dog-boy, their chains attached to his feet, and if they disturbed or crowded him in the night he would cuff them as one might a terrier pup! They came in time to follow me about, too, quite as naturally as dogs.

When going home on furlough I left them with a friend, who confidingly accepted the responsibility, but some six months later, wrote to me complaining of their conduct. It appeared that, as they increased in size, they had developed a desire to kill and consume other animals in the station, particularly goats, of whom they had already killed a goodly number, and had now taken to stalking children, apparently with like intent, which, as my friend naïvely observed, had made both himself and them distinctly unpopular. However, as I heard no more complaints, I assumed he had found means to prevent these man-eaters in embryo from carrying out their fell design.

* * * * * *

With a view to instilling a sporting spirit amongst my men, I introduced gymkhanas for the police force, including tent-pegging, etc., in which other officials in the station often took a part, as well as some of the officers from the military depôt nine miles off, who occasionally came in.

As prices advanced, however, owing to the famine, and living consequently became dearer, many Europeans put down their horses and took to bicycles instead. Finding these as convenient and necessarily more economical, several retained them permanently, with the result that bicycle, in place of horse, events became ultimately the chief feature in these gymkhana.

No doubt some of the feats performed on these machines were extraordinarily clever, but I often used to wonder what our veteran sportsmen—now retired or defunct—would have said to seeing the horse supplanted by such inanimate steeds as these! For performances on the latter, however clever and complicated they might be, can scarcely be compared with the bare-backed mounted events, and other daring equine feats, which, in the days of these old sportsmen, constituted the gymkhana.

* * * * * *

During the period I was stationed at Nasik, I spent all my Christmases as usual in camp, going one year for ten days to Pal, in my old District Khandesh, and one of my favourite old haunts where I had heard tigers had increased considerably since I left.

I hoped therefore to get some, and possibly bison too, for though I had killed so many of the latter, and have several good heads, I had never kept a mask, so was anxious to get one to set up.

The cold at Pal is so intense that we had finally to abandon our tents and take up our quarters in a small, forest hut, built of mud, and consisting of three small rooms. It had been built by a certain cheery individual, a doctor named P——, who, in a fit of generosity, presented it to the Government.

He used to be very amusing on the subject of the Government Resolution he had received in return, thanking him for his munificent gift, but poor as was the building I often

blessed him for having built it, as it had afforded me warm shelter on many an occasion.

My trip this time, however, proved somewhat unprofitable, so far as the shooting was concerned, though it was very pleasant to be back again amongst old scenes and faces, for many of the shikaris I had known, and friends from native states, all came in to welcome me. They had quite decided that being now a married man, I could no longer be the keen shikari I had been, and I was very glad of the opportunity of correcting this impression.

In addition to my wife a friend from the Deolali depôt accompanied me on this trip, the best and cheeriest of comrades, who almost directly afterwards, poor fellow, was killed in the South African campaign. We had several blank beats, and on one occasion I was posted with my wife on the identical tree from which many years before I had killed a tigress, though suffering at the time from a severe attack of ague.

I remember trembling so violently while the beast came on, that I was afraid her attention would be attracted to the tree. However, she came out straight toward me, and managing, somehow, to get my shaking rifle on to her, I rolled her over with a bullet through the forehead.

The blank beats I have mentioned continued for some days. At last, late one morning, we got good khubbar of a tiger having killed one of the buffaloes we had tied up as bait.

We started off at once, but the place was a long distance away, and by the time we arrived there, and made all arrangements for the beat, it was already late afternoon.

As my friend H—— had never shot a tiger I was particularly anxious that he should have the shot, so gave him the best place, but it was a very large piece of jungle and difficult, not merely to beat, but to command all its natural outlets with two guns only.

However, as it happened, at the first sound of the beaters, a fine tiger came out about fifty yards from his tree, but behind him, and as H—— could not turn round quickly enough, the beast went on.

As soon as I realized that H—— was unable to fire, and that the tiger, if not stopped, would probably get away,

I took a snap shot at him, as he was galloping through the undergrowth, but unfortunately missed.

He was, however, turned by one of the stops and roared.

We then discovered that there was another tiger or tigress in the jungle, for the roar was instantly replied to, and presently the two beasts, roaring alternately, kept charging the beaters in turn, both H—— and my wife being greatly impressed by the volume of sound they produced.

Meanwhile the sun having gone down the light was fading rapidly, and I saw that the only thing to be done was to stop the beat and get out of the jungle as quietly as we could, in the hope of getting them the next day.

We found, however, that to get out of the jungle, quietly or otherwise, was more difficult than I had imagined. The tigers having been disturbed and hustled were now thoroughly savage, charging out whenever the stops tried to leave their trees, and we had finally to go round to each and get the men down under cover of our rifles, and it was quite dark when we reached home.

Next morning on visiting the jungle we found that both the tigers had cleared off—probably during the night or early morning; we accordingly returned to camp, and drove on to Nasik, thoroughly disappointed, and with nothing more agreeable to remind us of this trip than a severe attack of malaria, which each and all of us, including all our servants, had managed to pick up!

In addition to its other attractions, some of which I have attempted to describe, Nasik has long enjoyed a reputation for its possession of antiquities; the most celebrated amongst them being its old brass idols, chains, etc., etc., and many officials stationed there from time to time have, in days gone by, made valuable collections of genuinely antique specimens of these articles.

Latterly, however, tourists, notably Americans, have paid such long prices for these curiosities that there are now few of the genuine article left. Nevertheless the wily natives, finding the demand for them in no way diminished, has proved himself quite equal to the occasion by importing large quantities from England!

Made, probably in Birmingham, and admirably executed

in imitation of the original, these are then buried or put down an old well for a season, whence they issue as "antique" as even an American could desire, and would trouble the most expert of experts to detect.

These are now hawked round and sold at most profitable rates, as I know to my cost, having purchased some myself, till I had learned to be wiser. But the genuine article, such as bed and swing chains, all beautifully carved, which in former years could be obtained for the price of their weight, as brass, now fetches as much as Rs.100 each, and are difficult to obtain even at this price.

* * * * * *

My period of service at Nasik having expired I was next posted to Dharwar, a pretty healthy spot, situated in the western ghats. It was considered at one time quite a good district for big game, but the increase of cultivation, and the clearing of the forest, has practically ruined the shooting, and big game can now be obtained only after much trouble and arrangement.

I found it was the practice in this part of the country, and in Kanara, for sportsmen, when beating for tiger or other big game, to shoot from ladders propped up against a tree, instead of sitting on the tree itself as is generally done elsewhere.

These ladders are specially made for the purpose, having a kind of seat on the topmost rung, but this seemed to me a clumsy arrangement, for besides being cumbersome to carry about, they are liable to slip, and also likely to attract the attention of the animal.

I had some trouble, however, in inducing the local shikaris to use the simpler contrivance employed in Khandesh, which consists of two poles, each about five feet long. These are fixed parallel to each other, across two or more projecting branches, thus forming, not only a comfortable seat, but one from which the sportsman can shoot in all directions.

Moreover, in a perch made in this manner the occupant is absolutely safe, whereas a ladder, as I have said, is liable to slip, and in a case I heard of later, actually did, causing a serious accident.

The incident happened to Colonel P——, a celebrated

Kanara sportsman, who told me of it himself, and though there was a comic side to the story, the incident in itself came near to ending in as terrible a tragedy as it would be possible to imagine. It appears that on one occasion while shooting with a young civilian, just out from home, he was climbing to his position when the ladder slipped, the fall breaking his thigh. The youngster ran to assist him, and P——, who was in excruciating agony, and hardly knew what he was saying, called out, " Oh, for God's sake shoot me ! "

A few moments later, having recovered his composure, he found, to his horror, the muzzle of a rifle pointing to his head and the trembling young civilian evidently about to carry out the request he had involuntarily uttered ! I refrain from describing the language he used, but it was not complimentary to the intelligence of his friend, who in his opinion, as he told him, was fit only for a mad-house, or at best, an appointment in the Secretariat !

In a village of the Dharwar district, near to Ranubrunner, there is a very interesting temple dedicated to the worship of the god Khundobar, a very ancient deity to whom, however, there are now very few temples remaining.

The special one referred to stands on the summit of a small hill, and is deserving of mention if only for the very curious attitude adopted by the worshippers at this shrine, who, when practising their devotions, assume the characters of dogs. Tradition has it that this particular god to whom the temple is erected, was a great shikari, and, with his pack of hounds, hunted the hills around, but strangely enough in the one or two other temples, to this god, still remaining, there is no trace of the canine portion of the legend at all.

Girls are still dedicated to the use of this temple, and the dog-devotees are furnished from the villages round about, certain families undertaking to supply a number, presumably in each generation. They live on the villagers, apparently do no work, and are in fact a perfect pest.

When the temple authorities are informed that any official wishes to see the temple, they generally make as imposing a show as possible, collecting a number of the

devotees, who are rough-looking specimens, wearing black, hairy caps, red sashes, and are of a generally shaggy appearance all over.

The presiding priest, on receipt of baksheesh, produces some bananas, which he slices up, and placing them on small brass troughs, calls up the " dogs." These come scrambling along on all fours, barking and yelping, and even fighting, growling and biting at each other over the troughs, till having secured a trough each, return to a corner to eat it in solitude.

They do not use their hands, but eat too, like dogs from the troughs, which are beautifully made in solid brass and very old. One of my friends was lucky enough to pick up one of these, as they are difficult to buy, and also some of the little images of horses from the temple. The god himself is not repulsive to look at, and his images often have the symbolical five cobras over their heads.

After the dog-devotees have been fed, and if the baksheesh has been generous, and the supply of bananas plentiful, they will give a further exhibition of their dog-like antics, growling, fighting, leaping, howling, and rolling about in a ridiculous and most repulsive manner, and finally canter barking down the hill by way of giving their departing visitors a good send off.

These people also attend the larger fairs, attracting huge crowds by their many tricks with knives and skewers, which they pass through the muscles of their arms, thighs, and calves, till they are streaming with blood. It is said that by certain methods of massage and manipulation they are able to place the knives between the muscles, and thus avoid any serious injury resulting from the wound. Doubtless this strange worship with its many corruptions will eventually die out, and the sooner the better, for though the ridiculous antics are amusing for a time, and evidently enjoyed by the performers themselves, their mode of life cannot fail to be degrading.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC

CHAPTER XVII

The Western Ghats—Castle Rock and Morumgoa—Fine scenery—Spend a hot season at Castle Rock—A kill in a ravine—The guns posted—A tiger viewed—A doubtful hit—Bapu the optimist—A tell-tale leaf—An advance in close order—The enemy prepares to charge—Careful shooting necessary—Success—Following up a wounded bear—A curious story—Second sight—An apparition in the night—Convincing evidence—An apology to my readers—Another tiger marked down—Caught napping—An unexpected encounter—My perilous position—Face to face—A desperate proceeding—Seeking refuge in a bush—A precarious shelter—Suspense relieved—A lucky shot—Curious evidence of a recent victim—A man-eating panther—Carries off a child—The body found—Watching over the remains—An eerie vigil—A jackal greedy but suspicious—The panther at last—Creeping up to the "kill"—Only five yards off—A steady shot at his chest—Hit but not dead—Too dangerous to follow up by night—The hunt resumed—Tracking by blood and footprints—Found dead—A well-nourished beast—The fallacy of theories regarding man-eaters.

THE magnificent scenery of the Western Ghats is too well known to need any description, and is too beautiful for any one—except an expert with pen or pencil—to depict. Castle Rock on the S. M. Railway and Morumgoa were the two places we generally went to.

The latter used to be at one time somewhat famous for the number of tigers and panthers to be found in the neighbourhood, and a friend of mine, who was once stationed there as consul and head of the railway, shot a good many. The jungles around still contain some of these beasts, and bison, too, I believe.

These jungles, which connect with those of the Kanara District, contain many a hill and valley of quite extraordinary beauty, and in the course of our shikar expedition we often came on exquisite little nooks and streams bordered with the Royal Osmunda fern.

The whole of our hot weather we spent at Castle Rock

where I was then acting as Railway—as well as District—Superintendent of Police, and while shooting towards the end of that hot season with two friends, W—— and B——, we received news of a tiger having killed and eaten the greater part of a buffalo we had tied up the night before.

The kill was in a deep ravine filled with high grass and bushes and flanked on both sides by huge masses of rocky boulders.

We had taken up our positions on trees, after sending men round to drive towards us, when we heard loud shouts, followed by roars from the tiger. Presently one of the stops to my right called out that the tiger had broken back.

Scarcely had the man spoken, when there was another uproar among the beaters, and the next moment I saw the tiger coming along the bed of the ravine at a brisk trot and roaring loudly all the time.

When about sixty yards from my tree, he suddenly sprang up the bank. I had now only occasional views of him among the boulders, but noting an open space across which he was bound to pass, I watched it closely with my rifle ready, and as he was crossing it, I fired.

He swerved distinctly at the shot and disappeared over the ridge. Meanwhile the beaters having come up, we followed on the tracks, but finding no blood my friends and their shikaris naturally concluded I had missed. I was very confident, however, I had hit him somewhere, and while W—— and B—— were condoling with me on my miss, Bapu my own shikari, who had great faith in his master's shooting, and had followed on alone on the track ran back to us, and with a broad grin illuminating his rugged features, held up a leaf on which there was a few specks of blood.

To follow the tiger up now was a task attended with some danger, for the cover was very dense and high, being composed mostly of thick bamboo jungle.

Keeping well together, however, with the guns in front we proceeded cautiously, halting frequently to allow of the men climbing into trees and examining the ground before us, in hopes of obtaining a view of the beast.

Suddenly Bapu, who was leading, dropped on all fours, pointing in front of him, and at the same moment I caught

sight of the tiger crouching behind a clump of bamboos. Calling to the others that I had seen him, and warning them that he was wounded and therefore dangerous, we continued to advance, but more cautiously than before.

When within about ten yards of her, for she proved to be a tigress, I noticed the end of her tail twitching nervously like that of a cat when stalking a bird, and knowing from this that she was on the point of charging, I took careful aim and fired.

The bullet, striking her between the neck and shoulders, killed her on the spot, which was fortunate, for had she made good her charge, one or more of us must assuredly have been mauled, if not killed. She was a handsome beast though small, being only eight feet six inches, but with a finely marked skin.

On return to camp, the village turned out in great numbers and were much rejoiced, in their own apathetic way, for it seemed she had killed a number of their cattle, the ravine where she had made her lair being close to the village.

My first bullet we found had struck her rather low, but being in a good line with the shoulder, she would no doubt have died eventually from the wound.

* * * * * *

Writing of following up wounded animals, reminds me of a very curious story connected with a sad accident that occurred in this way some years ago, when C—— of the I.C.S. was terribly mauled by a bear.

While shooting in Khandesh at the foot of the Satpura Hills, it seems he had wounded a bear the day before, and while following up the blood-tracks the next day, the vicious brute charged him, inflicting ghastly wounds, and though he was taken on to the nearest place, Chopda, and attended to, he died before medical aid could reach him.

The curious part of the story is, that his wife, who happened to be staying with Mrs. H——, a friend of mine at the time, and occupying the same bedroom, was awakened during the night and saw her husband in the room. She spoke to him, expressing her surprise at his returning so unexpectedly, then waking her friend, apologized to her for the unceremonious manner in which he had come in,

and getting out of bed apparently followed him into another room.

Mrs. H——, who had seen nothing herself, was naturally at a loss to understand what she meant, but feeling somewhat alarmed, got up at once and followed Mrs. C—— into the room where she had gone, to find her lying on the floor in a swoon.

On coming round she told Mrs. H—— that she felt sure her husband had met with some accident, as his clothes were all torn and he was bleeding from wounds on his face and body.

The next day Mrs. H—— received a telegram saying that C—— was dead and asking her to break the news to his wife.

The story was told me by Mrs. H—— herself on whom the incident had naturally made a great impression, and as she was by no means an hysterical person, or given to romancing, I can only suppose she was repeating what had actually occurred.

* * * * * *

In writing a narrative of adventures, extending over so long a period as thirty years, it is difficult to remember the sequence of events. I must therefore make this my excuse for introducing here an account of an experience with some tigers which should have been included in the description of the shooting expedition I made with Colonel Philips, part of which was described in a previous chapter.

Of the two tigers bagged on this trip, the one which fell to my rifle was a large heavy beast with an extraordinarily short tail.

The men had marked him down in a small dry sandy ravine with barely any cover, the last place one would have thought a tiger would lie up in, more especially as there was a thickly wooded ravine not very far.

But, as our Bhils remarked in their quaintly worded Hindustani, "Wo bagh burra lumba sey aya," * and I have no doubt that having made a heavy meal, he had used that ravine as a temporary shelter on his way to heavier cover, and had thus been caught napping. We found later that he had in fact killed a bullock just before.

* "That tiger has come a long distance."

We tossed up for places, and Philips winning the toss, chose the more likely post, a small teak tree standing at the head of the ravine. After seeing him comfortably installed, I took up my post, some fifty yards to his extreme right on a side path leading to the covert, my idea being to intercept the tiger should he attempt to leave the ravine by this path, which, however, was not very likely, as the ground, except for a few scanty thorn bushes here and there was practically bare.

The shouts of the beaters were soon challenged by a loud roar from the tiger on my friend's left, and I was gazing intently in his direction, momentarily expecting to hear the report of his rifle, when I suddenly felt there was some one behind me. Instantly looking round, I was horrified to find myself face to face with a huge tiger, with scarcely a yard between us. Fortunately the beast was so intent on slinking away from the beaters that he had evidently not seen me; my clothes, sunburnt arms, face and legs being all much the same colour as the ground. To blaze into his face, drop my rifle and dive into the thorn bushes, was all the work of an instant, and in this precarious shelter I remained, perfectly still, and hardly daring to breathe. Presently, to my intense relief and joy, I heard one of the stops calling out that the tiger was dead.

It had been killed by the veriest accident, the bullet merely grazing the top of the head, but providentially deep enough to fracture the skull. P——, who now joined me, was full of congratulations at my wonderful escape, for he had witnessed the whole incident from his tree.

He now told me how the tiger had shown himself for a moment on his left, and as suddenly dropped into the nullah, and passing one of the stops who failed to stop him, had gone creeping stealthily along in my direction with his chin almost touching the ground, and his eyes gazing straight in front of him.

On skinning the tiger, which as I have said was an exceptionally big one, we found the broken quill of a porcupine deeply embedded in his jaws and paws.

* * * * * *

I think I have already stated somewhere that when a

panther takes to man-killing, he becomes a far more terrible scourge than even the more famous man-eating tiger.

One of the worst examples of a man-eating panther I have come across was on one occasion when I was encamped at Wagra, a small Bhil hamlet consisting of a few huts, in the Bharwana State. A large panther had carried off a child, in broad daylight, who was playing with other children within a stone's throw of the village. The same animal had also, it appeared, killed and eaten a woman, collecting fire-wood, a short time before, but her body was never found.

It was late in the afternoon when I heard of the animal's latest victim, and going at once to the spot, I took up the tracks along a deep nullah which skirted the village, and presently came upon the body of the child. There were the usual fang-marks on the throat, and a portion of the chest and abdomen had been eaten.

After much persuasion the relatives of the dead child yielded to my request to leave the corpse where it lay in order that I might sit up near it, in the hope that the panther might return, when by shooting it I could, as I pointed out to them, rid the village of the pest.

There was no suitable tree on which I could build a machan, so I concealed myself behind a bush, adding a few branches as a further protection, but so arranged that I could look through them.

I decided to sit alone as my Havildar-cum-Shikari, though very keen to watch with me, had unfortunately a bad cough at the time, and I was afraid lest an untimely paroxysm occurring, he should scare the beast away.

In my previous remarks on man-eaters I have pointed out that the rapidity and uncertainty of their movements make it most difficult to locate them, and that they are very wary and cautious in approaching a kill. I therefore took every precaution to prevent myself being seen or heard; and in addition to my Rigby rifle had also a D.B. 10-bore loaded with slugs.

It was a bright moonlight night, and the intense stillness of the jungle, plus the ghastly object over which I was watching, had a none too pleasing effect on my nerves, and as the night drew on I felt distinctly "creepy."

Presently a single jackal appeared and giving a quick pull at the corpse as quickly slunk away, looking continually behind him. Just then I saw a huge panther coming stealthily along among the bushes, fringing the nullah banks, and halting about fifteen yards off, stood gazing intently in my direction. I thought at first it was a tiger, so enormous did the beast appear in the moonlight, and I was meditating whether to fire or let him come closer, when he again crept forward, and then stood facing me about five yards off. Now was my chance, and aiming very deliberately at his chest I pulled the trigger slowly. Acknowledging the shot with a loud roar he plunged into the thicket where he now remained though hidden from my sight.

That he was hit I had no doubt, for presently there issued from the covert a succession of low groans with an occasional deep coughing sigh, and although I could not see him, I guessed from the sound that my bullet had done its work. My men on hearing the report of the rifle now came up with lighted torches, all keen to advance into the jungle, but I would not allow them to embark on such a dangerous task by night, for though almost convinced the beast was dead, the risk seemed too great.

By the first streak of dawn we were up and on our way to the jungle, where, on arrival, I was startled to find the corpse, or what remained of it, had disappeared. Could it be that I had missed the beast after all, or that he had again returned to his kill and completed his dreadful feast? I hardly thought it possible, and yet it seemed unpleasantly like it. Happily a closer examination proved to us that it was the hyenas and jackals who had been feasting on the remains, for the footprints of these animals were plainly visible all round.

But the tracks of the panther too were there, which we now took up, and, aided by the blood, of which there was a quantity on the trail, we soon came up to him, lying stone dead in a bush.

On examining the body I found my express bullet had struck him exactly in the centre of the chest, smashing the heart and lungs to pieces.

He measured just seven feet eight inches from tip of

nose to end of tail, and was a stout heavy beast, very different to the mangy toothless creature which, according to the now exploded theory, all man-eaters were believed to be. This one, in fact, was exceptionally well nourished, thus proving that, odious as was the habit he had acquired, the diet he had taken to evidently agreed with him.

CHAPTER XVIII

A bait taken—Living animals as bait—A seemingly cruel practice—Reasons for adopting it—A tigress put up—Missed—Charging through the beaters—Cubs discovered—An all-night vigil—The tigress returns—Finding her cubs—Process described—An opportunity lost—The cubs disappear—Tigress or ghost—How the cubs were removed—Morning at last—Tracking up—Death of the tigress—The cubs found—Dharwar again—A shooting camp—News of game—Daily disappointments—Two tigers reported at last—The beat—Turned by a stop—A roar and a rush—A hurried shot—Instantaneous effects—The tiger's mate—Beaters charged again—Marked down—Drawing lots for places—A tempting offer—Why I rejected it—Premature congratulation—The tigress let off again—Questions and answers—Extraordinary performance—Subsequent explanations—What might have been accomplished—The shikaris' disgust—A panther in my tent—My dogs wake me up—A desperate struggle in the dark—Firing haphazard—A sudden crash—Ominous silence—The servants aroused—They arrive with a lantern—What the light revealed—One dog missing—Carried off by a panther—A fruitless pursuit in the dark—Resumed at daybreak—Remains of Rover found—An unsuccessful vigil—The spot re-visited months later—A panther shot—Was it the same ?

I HAVE, I think, in a previous chapter describing the tiger and its ways, made mention of the curious manner in which the tigress feeds her cubs. I was once fortunate enough to witness this strange meal.

I had received news of this particular tigress late one afternoon. She was said to have killed one of my tied-up buffaloes, and was reported to be lying up in a ravine some eight miles from my camp.

I have already stated elsewhere that one of the methods employed to locate a tiger or panther is to bait the jungles in the neighbourhood he frequents, that is to say, to tie up buffaloes or goats, as the case may be, in all places which he is likely to pass in order that he may kill one, and thus give the sportsman a chance of locating him.

This tying up of live animals for the tiger or panther

to devour, may appear, at first sight, to be a somewhat cruel proceeding, but it must be remembered that neither of these animals will touch a dead bait, therefore the only chance of locating them is to place some live animal in their way, and thus by sacrificing the life of one buffalo or goat, accomplish the destruction of a beast that has already killed many of both, and if not destroyed himself, will kill many more, and possibly some human beings as well.

But to go on with my story.

My men had as usual arranged the beat admirably, and I had not been long posted when the tigress came out about fifty yards to my left front. I had a very fair shot at her, but though I emptied both my barrels, she was evidently untouched, and charging through the beaters with a succession of loud roars, disappeared into some thick jungle beyond.

Feeling very much ashamed of myself, I went back with the men to the spot from which she had started, where we found three cubs lying asleep at the bottom of a nullah; they were handsome little beasts, and about the size of a domestic cat.

The beat had been a long one, and darkness was coming on apace. Nevertheless, I decided to sit up for the tigress over her cubs, for that she would return to them there was not the slightest doubt.

Selecting a convenient tree, we hastily constructed a machan on which Eloo and myself, with the aid of some native blankets, were soon as comfortably installed as circumstances would admit of. The rest of the men returned to camp, their services being no longer required.

The moon was at its full; the night therefore was almost as bright as day, which was fortunate, for otherwise we might possibly have both gone off to sleep. It must have been somewhere between twelve and one when I heard the cubs making a peculiar gruntling kind of noise which was immediately followed by the appearance of the tigress on the scene.

So quietly had she approached that neither of us was aware that she was coming. She stood over the cubs for a while, then, to our astonishment, we heard her unmistakably

going through the process of disgorging, followed by the equally distinct sound of the cubs greedily lapping up what their mother had disgorged.

So interested was I in these proceedings, that I never thought of firing at her, and after a few seconds, she disappeared, or rather glided away as stealthily as she had come, and it was only then I realized how foolish I had been, to have lost so good a chance; however, this made me all the more determined to have a shot at her, should she come again, as I hoped she would.

Hours went by and I think I must have been asleep, for the next thing I remember was Eloo, clutching me by the arm, and saying, "Sahib, she has been again and has taken away the cubs." Being naturally much annoyed, I asked him angrily why he had not awakened me. "I was too frightened, Sahib," he answered. "She is not a tiger at all, but a Shaitan,* we had better leave her alone."

I could hardly believe the man's story, but looking down at the spot where the cubs had been I could see that they were certainly not there. He then described to me how the tigress had again come in the same ghostly fashion, her approach being heralded as before by the gruntling noises uttered by the cubs, and how she had taken one up in her mouth and carried it away, evidently repeating the process with the other two, for there had been three cubs in all.

Morning broke at last, and when the men returned we took up the tracks of the tigress, finally marking her down in a ravine about three-quarters of a mile away. Here, having taken up my position, I had eventually the satisfaction of bowling her over as she passed underneath my tree.

We then looked for the cubs and found them secreted in some high grass at the edge of the ravine, where she had evidently carried them. We brought all three of them home. One died after a time, but the other two throve well, and eventually grew up to be the two troublesome pets, of which mention has been made in a previous chapter.

* * * * * *

* Devil, meaning here, probably, "ghost."

A SERIES OF DISAPPOINTMENTS

Once more I find myself wandering back, this time to Dharwar, and again to tell a tale of my adventures with some tigers which should have been chronicled before; but for reasons already stated, I have abandoned all attempt at chronological narrative, and will now relate each incident as it comes back to my mind.

The one I am now about to tell of occurred at Tadas, a village some eighteen miles from Dharwar, and it was during one Christmas vacation I had arranged to meet two friends, who, for the purpose of this story, may be designated respectively as W—— and M——.

From the shikaris, who had preceded us, we heard on our arrival that two tigers and a panther were believed to be in some outlying jungle, we had accordingly reasonable expectation of good sport.

Luck, however, was against us, for though we were out almost daily on information seemingly reliable, searching the jungle for several miles around, the beasts we were in quest of always managed somehow to evade us, till at last in desperation we decided to devote our attention to smaller game.

Duck and snipe were fortunately plentiful, on and around the several tanks contiguous to the camp, and as we had a Berthon boat with us, it helped us in this sport, as well as affording us much amusement, for the boat was small and frail, and our eccentric handling of it, especially under sail, added much to our enjoyment of the sport.

We had, in fact, become almost resigned to our disappointment as regards the larger game we had hoped to meet with, when one morning a man came running into the camp to report that two tigers had just been marked down by our shikari, who had been all this time, we knew, on the look out. On cross-examination, however, this Khubbar did not seem very convincing, and having been so often disappointed, we had become somewhat sceptical in the matter of such news. The tigers—in this instance, however—were said to be lying up in a likely covert, viz. a small rocky ravine with dense masses of creepers and brushwood.

In these circumstances we decided to try our luck once more, and accordingly lost no time in starting for the spot.

Here, after drawing lots for places, we took up our position, climbing stealthily into our respective trees, and taking all precautions to avoid making any noise for fear of disturbing the beasts.

As the beaters advanced I saw one of the tigers coming, creeping along directly for my position, but owing to the density of the covert, I could only catch occasional glimpses of him, for the striped skin of a tiger harmonizes so extraordinarily with the surrounding foliage as a rule, that it is often very difficult to detect him.

Just in front of my tree, however, was a clear space about five yards in width, so I determined not to fire till the beast could reach this opening, and thus give me a more certain shot; but while waiting for this I heard one of the stops suddenly snap a twig and guessed at once that the tiger was trying to sneak up one of the side paths.

It was a moment of intense excitement, for everything now depended as to whether the stop had succeeded in preventing the beast from turning into the side path or not. Presently, however, there was a roar and a rush and the next moment the tiger appeared, immediately below me, going at a fast gallop, and in another instant would have disappeared into the dense covert beyond, but realizing the necessity for immediate action, I fired at once, and the heavy bullet from my Rigby Express striking the base of the neck divided the spine.

Death was instantaneous, and much to my delight the mighty beast sank down on his tracks. As the report from my rifle went echoing through the jungle, the other tiger, or rather tigress, for such she proved to be, broke back through the beaters, fortunately without doing them any harm.

We took up her tracks, finally marking her down in an open ravine, the sloping banks of which were studded with thick trees and curra—a coarse kind of reed.

We drew lots again for places, and took up our position, mine being the upper end of the covert, while W—— and M—— were on the banks to the left and right of me respectively, the best post having fallen to M——.

On hearing the beaters advance the tigress came trotting down the nullah, and when she was almost opposite

my post I gave a low whistle. She halted at once at the sound, offering me a splendid shot, and at a distance of not more than thirty yards. I would not fire, however, as I was anxious for my friend M—— to get the shot, for he had seemed very keen, and I knew had never seen a tiger in the wild state before. My whistling had the effect desired, for presently the beast turned to the right, and going leisurely up the bank, passed immediately under the tree occupied by M——. I was congratulating myself on having, as I thought, procured him his first tiger, when to my amazement, I saw the beast pass on unmolested, and disappear into some thick jungle beyond. Totally at a loss to understand his object in thus deliberately allowing the tiger to escape, I shouted to him asking what had happened, and "Why he had not fired at the beast." The last query being somewhat more peremptory in tone, and less politely worded, as was only natural after what he had —or rather *hadn't*—done!

His answer to my question was, if possible, more aggravating still, for his reply was, "I don't know," to which he added, "the tiger has gone away," seemingly quite surprised that the beast should have taken advantage of the opportunity he had given him to escape!

However, he explained to us later that he was so taken aback at the sudden appearance of the tigress, that he had never thought of firing at her, but that he was quite satisfied as he could now say he had actually seen a tiger! Though this was little consolation to me, who could so easily have shot her, or for our friend W——, who would have given a great deal for such a chance, and was, moreover, a good shot. It was a great disappointment, for the feat of having bagged two tigers in a district like Dharwar, where they were now so scarce and sought after, would have been an event long to be remembered. However, M—— being such a good fellow, we spared him the rating he so richly deserved, being quite certain, moreover, that when he realized what a chance he had lost his remorse would be in itself sufficient punishment.

Our beaters and shikaris too, were greatly disappointed, and, not unnaturally, felt somewhat aggrieved, for as they said, "We take all the risk and trouble to beat up a tiger

to the Sahib and when we drive it past his post he will not shoot it."

We never got this tigress, for after the fiasco I have described, it was too late to track her further that evening, and though our men, despite their disappointment, worked loyally for some days, they failed to mark her down again.

* * * * * *

In my remark about panthers, made in a previous chapter, I mentioned that they sometimes come into a camp at night, and have since quoted an adventure of this kind experienced by a friend. I now remember one which happened to myself when encamped at Chap-Pani, a desolate village situated in the heart of the Satpudas.

It was a wild lonely spot, and being just the kind of place where a wild animal might be likely to visit the camp, I always slept with my gun under the mattress, and my two dogs, Snap and a Persian greyhound named Rover, chained to the foot of my bed.

One night, a particularly dark one, I remember, I was sleeping in my tent, near which were the servants, all also asleep, round their smouldering fire, when I was awakened by the loud barking of the dogs, which were plunging and tugging at their chains, in their frantic struggles to get free. At least, so I suppose, for I could see nothing, the tent being dark as pitch.

I guessed at once—or as soon as I had had time to collect my thoughts—that one of them had been seized by a panther, and springing out of bed, I shouted loudly for help, at the same time firing my gun in the direction whence the sounds proceeded, risking the chance of killing the dogs.

The scuffle ceased at once, there was a sudden crash, then an ominous silence, and I knew, or rather felt instinctively, that one at least of the two dogs had gone. By this time the servants were aroused and came in with a lantern, when we found that, as I had guessed, one of the dogs was missing. It was the greyhound Rover, which had been dragged or carried off, and, undoubtedly, by a panther.

There was a deep ravine just below the camp along which the beast had gone. We followed this up rapidly,

shouting and firing the gun at intervals as we advanced, on the chance that the panther might be scared and drop the dog. The latter was apparently still alive, as we heard it give one cry, and encouraged by this we quickened our pace, but the panther was evidently travelling faster, for though we held on for some time we seemed to get no nearer, and were finally obliged to abandon the pursuit.

The next morning at daybreak we took up the panther's tracks, and eventually came upon the remains of my poor old Rover, of which the greater portion had been devoured. We beat the jungle several times, and that night I sat up over what was left of the old dog, but the panther, possibly scared by our pursuit, did not come back to his kill.

Some months afterwards I happened to re-visit that very spot and had the luck to shoot a huge panther, but whether this was the same brute which had deprived me of my dog it was naturally impossible to say, but I consoled myself with the thought that in all probability it was.

CHAPTER XIX

The destruction of panthers—Trapping often necessary—A trap described—A trapping incident—Screams in the dead of night—Turning out the guard—Rush to the rescue—What was found in the trap—The biter bit—"A fine bait for the panther"—Drugged and disorderly—Bhil police and prisoners—How the position was reversed—A partridge shooting record—The Dangchia Bhils—An extraordinary race—Monkeys and rats as food—Belief in witchcraft—Veneration for tigers—Habits and customs—Another quaint people—Professional bird-snarers—Their snares described—A terror to legitimate sportsmen—Why panthers are so destructive—Less dangerous to human life than tigers—An example—Sportsmen charged by a wounded tiger—Attempt to escape—A fatal slip—Severely mauled—Succumbs to injuries—Another fatal accident—Wounded tiger in high grass jungle—A sudden charge—Savage attack—Shaken like a rat—Extraordinary courage shown by a Goanese butler—Grappling with a tiger unarmed—A double tragedy—Twelve-foot tigers—A myth—How to cure and preserve skin and heads—Hot-blooded animals should be skinned promptly—Instructions for skinning—Pegging down—How to retain proportions—Burnt alum or wood ashes—Trophies to be carefully looked after—A curious result of neglect.

THERE is probably no wild animal in India so destructive and troublesome, especially to the villagers living near the jungle it frequents, as the panther. In some districts these animals are so numerous that in spite of the numbers shot by sporting officials and the local shikaris, it is often found necessary to reduce their numbers by catching them in traps.

When I was in Khandesh there were two of these panther-traps, belonging to the Bhil Agency, huge iron machines, weighing about fifty pounds a-piece, and made on the principal of an ordinary gin rat-trap, but with long spikes instead of teeth and powerful springs at both ends.

Many were the hyenas I caught with these traps, and once a small panther; but on one memorable occasion,

when encamped with my chief, Probyn, at Pansumbal (Native States), we captured something larger, though not quite the sort of creature we wanted to entrap.

We had baited the trap one evening with a goat, and had set it near a path leading to the village where on the previous day we had seen the tracks of a large panther. The chances of our capturing him were therefore fairly good, but as we knew the beast was not likely to take the bait till late at night we retired to bed at our usual time.

We had been asleep some hours when about midnight we were awakened by the most unearthly screams, and thinking some one had been seized by the panther, we jumped out of bed, turned out our police guard, and arming ourselves with guns and spears, we ran to the spot whence the sounds proceeded.

What was our amazement on arrival to find a wretched Bhil firmly fixed between the jaws of the trap. He turned out to be one of the villagers, who, on hearing the bleating of the goat, thought he might as well appropriate it, and had thus been actually caught in the very act.

It was truly a case of "the biter bit;" fortunately he was not severely hurt, though one of the long spikes had pierced the calf of his leg. He was fortunate, too, in being rescued at once, for had the panther come up when he was in this plight, he might easily have fallen a victim to the beast.

On relating the incident next morning to a petty chief who happened to be visiting our camp, he quite seriously remarked, "What a pity, Sahib, you released the man, for he would have made a fine bait for the panther." However, as our visitor was under the influence of opium at the time, it is only fair to assume that this somewhat bloodthirsty suggestion was the outcome of a mind disordered for the moment.

On another occasion this same individual while again enjoying a period of temporary mental aberration, due to the same cause, suddenly developed an apparently irresistible desire to hack a dead bear to pieces with his sword. His intention was fortunately discovered, but only just in time to prevent an unusually fine trophy being ruined.

This incident reminds me of an amusing story, once told me by a friend, in connection with this drug and drink habit to which, as I have already mentioned in my description of these people, the Bhils are unfortunately addicted. On the occasion to which this story refers, a party of the Bhil Corps Sepoys, while escorting some prisoners to the magistrates' camp, came upon a liquor shop *en route*. Unable to resist the temptation, they stopped to have a drink, with the result that the Sepoy escort ultimately arrived at the camp in a bullock cart, all more or less *hors de combat*, while the prisoners they were supposed to be escorting, were acting as their guard!

However, this is their only little failing, for taking them as a whole, the Bhils are singularly free from the vice common to most other Indian natives, and, as sportsmen, are, as I have also said before, difficult to beat. They are exceptionally expert with the bow, used either with arrows or pellets, and in throwing any heavy implement such as an axe or hatchet.

Once when out shooting small game, one of our party missed a partridge which rose almost under his feet; a Bhil beater, seeing the miss, threw his hatchet at the bird, and, much to the humiliation of the sportsman, and to the amazement of us all, knocked it over.

In my description of the Bhils I find I have omitted mention of one section of the tribe, viz. the Dangchias, or Dang Bhils, who are probably the most uncivilized of any of the wild tribes of India. They live in cone-shaped huts made of tree boughs, and feed on vermin, garbage of all kinds, monkeys and rats being also a portion of their diet, and Mouha spirit their favourite beverage.

Of clothing they have practically none, the "langote," a narrow strip or loin-cloth, and a wisp of cloth round their heads being all they use in the way of dress. Like their brethren they are strong believers in omens, and greatly dread the powers of witches and of the Evil Eye. Their most frequent crime is the torturing of the former, generally selecting an old woman as their victim.

Their chief object of worship is the "Vagh Deo," or Tiger God, in whom they believe the souls of their ancestors to have become incarnate. Hence they hold the tiger as

sacred and will never assist in the destruction of this animal.

Thoroughly disliking work of any kind, they do very little cultivation. They are ruled by their separate chiefs, or Naiks, who have very high ideas of their dignity as Rajahs, claiming to be descended from the Rajpoots, consequently never descend to labour or work of any sort, thinking this fit only for their subjects. They, when not resting or idling otherwise, roam about the jungles with bows and arrows in search of hare or peacocks.

The country which these Dang Bhils inhabit is most unhealthy and difficult of access, consisting as it does of a mass of steep, wooded, flat-topped hills, lying to the north-west of the District of Khandesh.

While on the subject of Bhils and the sporting proclivities of these people, I am reminded of another class or clan, for they can scarcely be termed a tribe, who, though quite distinct from the Bhils, are also sportsmen, but of a somewhat lower order, for to describe them accurately, they are professional hunters or snarers of game.

These Phas Pardhies, as they are called—the word Phas meaning a "snare"—are extraordinarily clever in catching partridges and quails whose calls they have learned to imitate with an accuracy quite remarkable for any human voice to have acquired. In their methods too they are equally proficient and the snares they employ are most ingeniously contrived. They consist of a rack or light bamboo rail about four and a half inches high; this rail or frame has upright poles of bamboo fastened to it about six inches apart, between these pieces is a running noose of horse-hair. This apparatus being concealed in the grass, the birds are slowly driven towards the trap, and in trying to pass between the poles are caught by the head, neck, or feet as the case may be.

I was fortunate in being able to secure one of these traps, the men being very loath to part with them, and was much struck with the ingenuity of the contrivance and exquisite delicacy of the workmanship which, as they said truly, cannot be attained nowadays.

Their traps for catching deer and pigs are made much on the same plan, though naturally on a much larger scale—

the horse-hair loop is replaced by looped ropes, to which are fastened running nooses of gut.

These Phas Pardhies wander from place to place, snaring game, and are a perfect pest to the more legitimate sportsman, frightening off the antelope, etc., for miles around. However, as they are much addicted to crime, too, they are usually under close supervision of the police, and therefore their movements can be controlled to some extent.

But to come back to the subject with which this chapter opened, I have said there is no animal in India so destructive as the panther, and though this is true it would be perhaps more correct to say that its notoriety in this respect is due, less to the rapacity evinced by individuals of the species, than to the fact that, being so much more numerous than any other dangerous beasts of prey, their depredations are naturally of more frequent occurrence, especially as regards cattle, goats, etc.

As a menace to human life, the panther, even if a confirmed man-eater, is less dangerous than a tiger, for, in the first place, being less powerful, its attack can often be successfully resisted, and because for the same reason, the injuries it is capable of inflicting are necessarily less severe. Whereas in the case of tigers their greater weight and strength renders their attack practically irresistible, while their fangs and claws are so enormous that wounds inflicted by either are naturally more serious, and therefore more likely to prove fatal than those made by a panther, an animal so much smaller in every repect.

A very sad example of this was the case of H——, of the I.C.S., a great friend of mine, who was killed by a tiger at Wargaon in the District of Khandesh, while I was stationed there. He had wounded a tiger the previous day, and while tracking it up was suddenly charged by the beast, which had been lying up concealed in the shade of an overhanging rock.

As the tiger charged H—— fired both barrels into its face, but, failing to stop the beast, he turned, and was trying to get away, when he slipped and fell forward. The tiger was on to him at once, and seizing him by the back carried him off some twenty paces.

A Havildar of the Bhil corps, who was with him at the time, ran to his assistance at once, and, very pluckily placing the muzzle of his carbine against the tiger's side, shot him dead, but H—— had been terribly mauled, his back and shoulder-blades being fearfully lacerated—the number of teeth and claw wounds amounting, I am told, to no less than forty-two!

He was carried into camp, but died the next day. Though suffering tortures from the pain in his wounds he bore up wonderfully, conversing freely with the apothecary who attended him, to whom he gave a full account of the incident.

I was in camp some sixty miles distant at the time, and hearing of the occurrence from one of my troopers, I rode over at once, but unfortunately arrived too late to see him as he had already succumbed to his injuries, which, as I have said, were terribly severe.

This was his first tiger, and as he had been always very keen, and, I thought, somewhat inclined to be impetuous, I had only a short while before warned him to be careful, especially in the matter of following up wounded tigers; but being young and inexperienced, he had probably failed to realize the danger he was incurring. He was very popular with all who knew him, and consequently greatly missed.

But it is not always the inexperienced who fall victims to a tiger's merciless attack, for under circumstances even more tragic, was the death of another friend of mine, poor B—— of the Police, who was killed also by a tiger. He was by no means a novice in sport, for many a tiger and panther had already fallen to his rifle.

On the occasion under reference he had, it appears, wounded an enormous tiger, and taking up his tracks, was following them through high grass jungle when the beast suddenly charged him. Before B—— could put up his rifle the beast had seized him by the shoulder, and knocking him down, attacked him savagely with his teeth, driving his fangs deep into his body, and shaking him as a dog might a rat.

The extraordinary part of the story is that B——'s servant, a Goanese, who, though excellent servants, are not particularly courageous, seeing his master in the tiger's

grip, promptly ran to his assistance, and though unarmed, a tiffin basket he was carrying being his only weapon, actually grappled with the tiger, trying to drag him off his master's prostrate body.

The tiger, resenting his interference, instantly turned on him, and, seizing the brave fellow by the throat, killed him on the spot. What happened immediately after this I never heard, but the beast must have made off into the jungle, for B—— was still alive when found, and carried to the nearest station, where his wounds were dressed, but he sank rapidly and died the next morning.

I was not in Khandesh at the time but was told of the sad incident immediately on my return. The devotion of the Goanese to his master was well known, but we were all amazed at the extraordinary courage he had shown, for he must have known he was throwing away his life when embarking on this hopeless struggle with a wounded and infuriated tiger.

This tiger, I believe, measured nine feet six inches, rather above the average size, for though I have often heard men talk of tigers twelve feet long, I have never come across any such monsters myself, the largest I ever shot being, as I have said before, only ten feet two inches.

I have, however, seen tigers nine feet long, whose skins, when fresh, could easily have been stretched to eleven feet or even more, but not without unduly narrowing their breadth and thus impairing the beauty and value of the skin from the trophy point of view. So much, in fact, depends on how a skin is stretched and cured, and all trophies generally dealt with, that, even at the risk of boring non-sporting readers, I venture to give a short treatise on the subject.

To begin with, then, all hot-blooded animals, such as lions, tigers, and panthers, should be skinned before the flesh has had time to decompose, to prevent the skin being tainted. When the operator is a native, the process should be personally superintended by the sportsman. The skinning should be done as follows: place the beast on his back, and cut the skin from the lower lip in a direct line to the point of the tail. Then cut from inside of the ball of the hind feet, inside the hocks and up the middle

SKINNING A TIGER.
(Khandesh.)

[*To face p.* 148.

of the inside of the thighs, meeting the main cut first made about six inches from the root of the tail. The skin round the eyes and ears should be carefully separated from the skull, and as close to the bone as possible, the lips being pared as thin as they can be done without destroying the roots of the moustache. Now remove every particle of flesh and fat from the skin, especially about the lips and ears. Then, a suitable spot having been selected in the shade, and thoroughly cleaned, cover it over with a thin layer of clean straw, and peg the skin down on it, fur downwards and as symmetrically as possible, great care being taken to preserve its original proportions, which can best be accomplished by a liberal use of pegs.* A good width should be obtained across the shoulders so that the yellow fur may be entirely surrounded by its margin of white, and thus add greatly to the beauty of the skin. The ears, lips, and feet must be well painted over with a strong solution of arsenical soap, the rest of the skin being rubbed with finely powdered burnt alum, or if alum is not procurable, wood ashes, which will answer the purpose for awhile, and till properly cured.

The skin will take about three days to dry, and should then be sprinkled freely with turpentine on the fur side to keep insects off. After this it should be rolled up, with sheets of paper inside to prevent the fur being rubbed off, and sent home in this condition to be tanned, for natives are not good hands at tanning, and are apt to use salt, which rots the skin, especially in hot damp weather, and many a good skin has been spoilt by being treated in this way.

The skulls of tigers, panthers, etc., can be cleaned after the fleshy parts have been thoroughly removed with a knife. The four large canine fangs or teeth should be covered with a thick coating of bees' wax to exclude the air, or are liable to splinter. It is a curious fact that while many of the fangs are hollow, others are solid, heavy ivory.

In preserving the masks of deer or antelope for setting up, care should be taken to remove the skin of the whole

* It is a good plan to peg the skin down at the nose and end of tail, eighteen inches longer than the animal actually measures, for no amount of transverse stretching then can pull the skin out of proportion.—AUTHOR.

neck. Make the incision up the *back* of the neck and over the head between the ears, till the horns are reached—if these are wide apart, cut between them—right and left, carrying the incision right round the base of each horn. In separating the skin from the " bur " or base, be careful that the knife does not slip, especially in the region of the eyelids, nostrils, and ears. After the mask has been removed, cleanse it thoroughly of all fat and flesh, and rub in alum or wood-ash, the eyes, etc., being treated with arsenical soap, and then leave the mask to dry in the shade.

Bison and buffalo, as well as the larger Indian and African antelope, are very difficult to preserve owing to the remarkable thickness of their skins, but by making several incisions from the inside, to enable the preservative to penetrate the skin thoroughly, this difficulty can be overcome.

Even when set up it is a great mistake to expose head or skins to strong sunlight as they soon fade and so lose their striking appearance. This particularly applies to lion and tiger skins, these being more susceptible than those of other animals.

All trophies such as heads and skins should be carefully brushed at least once a week, and during the moth season, constantly sprinkled with turpentine; a neglect of these precautions may result in a valuable skin being ruined.

As an example of what may happen if trophies are neglected, I may mention that being busy for some days I had paid no attention to my trophy-room—a photograph of which is given—and found that during this time, a robin, entering through a broken window, had built its nest in my lion's mane !

TROPHY ROOM.
Looking East.

TROPHY ROOM.
Looking West.

[*To face p.* 150

CHAPTER XX

An apology and explanation—Big-game shooting and the camera—Some advice on the subject—How a fine picture was saved—Morumgoa and Goa—Poisonous water snakes and jelly fish—Phenomenal rainfalls—Ancient rights and dignity—Convicted criminals at large—Method of dispensing justice—A lengthy trial—Distortion of evidence—Paid by the page—Judges fees—How regulated—More prisoners out of gaol than in it—A Gilbertian system—Result of the trial—An interesting but depressing relic—A city of palaces that was—The cathedral and shrines—Site of "Auto da fe"—St. Saviour, the Patron Saint—Curious discrepancies—The convent by the sea—An old story retold—Abduction of a nun—A modern Paladin—An unpleasant surprise—The great Festival of the Church—Mummified body of the Saint—A sacrilegious souvenir hunter—The glass coffin—Transfer to Poonah—A bed of sedition—Absence of sport—Effect of the war on India—Surat my next station—The "Cradle of India"—Battered forts and ruins—The Nawabs and their descendants—An ancient Begum—Opposing factions—Pearl trade—Origin and present position—German intrigues and aspirations—The pearl merchant—The sorting and polishing processes—A magnificent specimen.

I MUST apologize for the length of my lecture on the curing and preservation of trophies, which has proved much longer than I intended, and will, I fear, make dull reading to the ordinary reader. Still, as this subject is one of such importance to sportsmen, for whom this work is primarily intended, I felt that for the instructions to be of any value, it was necessary to give them in sufficient detail to be clearly understood; for, after all, even from the sportsman's point of view, there would be no object in shooting big game if their heads and skins could not be preserved as mementos of his prowess.

While on this subject I take the opportunity also of advising strongly all who intend indulging in big-game shooting to invest in a good camera, and to acquire a thorough knowledge of photography in all its details.

During one furlough at home, I went through a regular course of developing, printing, etc., etc.

The process, I admit, was not altogether a pleasant one, and many were the blunders I made and the plates that I destroyed, but I was amply rewarded in the end by the numerous good and interesting pictures I obtained, many of which are reproduced in this work.

The modern method of having plates or films developed by professionals is no doubt convenient and saves much trouble, but I am convinced that many a good picture is lost in this way. The plates and films being developed wholesale, some are often rejected when a modification of the solution to meet the peculiar defect in the taking of the photo might often have redeemed them.

I remember once nearly losing my best picture in this way merely through being impatient. It was on a sweltering day in Khandesh and the atmosphere in my little dark tent was not conducive to serenity of temper, one photo, appearing to be over-exposed, I threw away as useless. It was a half plate, and fortunately did not break. Young H——, of the I.C.S.,* who was watching me, picked it up, saying he would like to try his hand on it, and he did, the result being the plate from which the picture opposite has since been reproduced.

And now, having, I much fear, exceeded the limits of legitimate digression, I will go on with my story. I have in a previous chapter made casual mention of a place named Mormugoa, but have since come across some notes I made regarding it, and from which I find it merits more elaborate description.

Mormugoa is Portuguese, and consists of a peninsula which terminates the W. I. P. & S. M. Railway. It has a wide stretch of sands, with good sea-bathing, except for the poisonous water snakes, peculiar to these seas, and a venomous kind of jelly fish, also the possibility of sharks a little further out. The natives are believed to possess an antidote for the bites of the snakes and jelly fish, but this is probably mere tradition.

Except in the cold weather months the heat is intense, necessitating, for the European, the lightest of light

* Afterwards killed by a tiger as described on page 147.

A JUNGLE SCENE.
(Khandesh.)

[*To face p.* 152.

THE MORNING BATH.
"Motee" and "Pir Bux."

[*To face p.* 153.

clothing. The monsoon is very strongly felt here, the rainfall being 150 inches, while at Castle Rock, halfway between Dharwar and Mormugoa, it is as much as 300 inches!

Mormugoa, Old Goa, with Panjmi, its modern headquarters, as well as the whole district under Portuguese jurisdiction, are all extraordinarily out of date, more especially in the matter of legislation, and judicial procedure, the Goanese (pure Portuguese are very rare), though very courteous and pleasant people, being tenacious to an extreme of their ancient rights and dignities.

The prisons are usually so full that many convicted criminals who should be undergoing imprisonment, are allowed to roam at large and live where they please, their only obligation being to report themselves at stated intervals to the officials. As an example of this quaint method of dispensing justice, I quote the following incident:—

An employee of the S. M. Railway, who lived by the seashore at Mormugoa, found a heap of putrid fish being piled up by some natives close to his bungalow. He asked them to remove it, but they refused, and continued adding to it daily, till at length the odour became so intolerable that he had it removed himself and thrown into the sea.

The owner resenting his action had him summoned, and because he did not appear at once, caused him to be arrested, then, instead of allowing him to settle the matter out of court by paying compensation, he was forced to undergo a lengthy, expensive, and irksome trial lasting many days.

One of my friends, a railway official, who was called on as witness and was also representing the Railway Company, was put to the greatest inconvenience, being cooped up all the time more like a prisoner than a witness and obliged to take all his meals in the tiny Court-house, the atmosphere of which in the damp climate was perfectly intolerable.

Though when questioned his replies were mostly monosyllabic, he was amused to find his answers all being rendered by the interpreter into long flowing sentences, without protest or remark from either the judge or advocate, but subsequently discovered that the latter, who took

down the evidence are paid by the page! Also that the judge's fees fluctuate according to the number of persons he convicted!

This quaint method of paying judges quite explains the want of accommodation in the jails, and therefore why, as just stated, there are more prisoners out of prison than within it. However, be this as it may, in this particular case, the accused got off with a fine, heavy legal expenses, and six months' imprisonment. He was, however, allowed as usual, but, as the Court put it, "as a great act of grace," to continue in his employment as railway guard, merely reporting himself once a month to the prison authorities. The whole system in fact is quite Gilbertian in theory; but to the truculent Englishman it was all very annoying; in particular, the fact of being convicted at all, vehemently declaring "that he could not be expected to live with evil-smelling fish outside his front door, and was not going to do so for all the niggers in Goa." However, he was eventually persuaded to submit to authority, in fact had no option in the matter, for his own people could not well support him, since the Bombay Government particularly emphasized the need of keeping on good terms with their Portuguese neighbours.

An interesting but depressing relic of past glories is Old Goa, formerly the chief town of the Portuguese settlement, on the Malabar or Western Coast of India. It is situated some distance up the river Mundair, Panjmi or New Goa, at the mouth of this river, being now the capital and port.

Of Old Goa it is difficult to imagine, now that so little trace of its former grandeur is to be seen, that about 1600, when it was said to be at its zenith of its prosperity, it was called the City of Palaces, with the fame of its splendour, trade and commerce ringing throughout the world.

That it must have been so, however, is supported by the fact that its wealth and magnificence proved a source of great temptation to the then kings of Bapur who often looted it. Since those days its government has changed more than once, and until it was finally conquered, I believe, by the Portuguese.

There are no palaces now visible, except those attached

to the cathedrals, of which there are three still standing, though shorn of their former splendour, the shrines and vestments which were once studded with exquisite gems of priceless value, being now decorated crudely with coloured glass imitation. Still, in the architecture of the cathedral there is much to admire, and then also the sight of the " Auto da Fe," where heretics were burnt in the time of the Inquisition.

St. Francis Zavier, as is well known, converted most of the inhabitants to Christianity, and has since been their patron Saint and is much revered by them.

Amongst other miraculous powers attributed to him is the gift of tongues. This is rather curious, as from some letters of his still extant it would appear that his ignorance in this particular respect, and I believe, a slight defect in speech, were the source of great grief and disappointment to him ! It would be interesting therefore to discover the origin of the apparently erroneous belief.

A fair number of tourists visit Old Goa and Panjmi. They come by steamer, and their time ashore being limited, they can necessarily see but little of the beauties of the place. Going there, however, as I did with officials, we were shown many interesting details, as, for example, the convent near the seashore, whence a famous traveller once attempted to remove a discontented nun.

It is an old story, but, like many of its kind, will possibly bear repeating. It appears that this modern Paladin, whose name for obvious reasons it is inadvisable to divulge, was on a yachting trip, and finding Goa an interesting spot, had anchored in the river, where his yacht had been lying for some months.

In addition to his fame as a great traveller, he had also a world-wide reputation as a linguist, and as it happened that in the convent library there were some ancient and very valuable books of Arabic and Sanscrit origin, the authorities gave him free access to this library.

Hence it came about, though how nobody knew, that in due course of time he became acquainted with one of the nuns, whom he subsequently described as " cherry-lipped," and who apparently tired of a conventual life was anxious to abandon it.

In the course of these stolen interviews this subject was probably discussed, for it ended in the Englishman assisting her to escape. By some method of signalling he discovered which was the window of her particular cell, and on the night fixed for the venture, he climbed up and proceeded to carry her off.

To save her good name, it was arranged that a cloth should be thrown over her, and that she was to pretend to resist him so as to give the appearance of being carried off against her will, but as he lifted her down he was disagreeably surprised to find her heavier than he had imagined and more bulky than he had any reason to expect, also that in the matter of resistance her struggle seemed to be somewhat unnecessarily violent.

However, thinking she was merely over-acting her part, he ignored these unpleasantly realistic efforts till they ended in her biting him. Taken completely by surprise, as well he might be, he dropped her at once, when to his horror he discovered that it was the portly Lady Abbess he had been so painfully abducting instead of his sylph-like, cherry-lipped nun!

Leaving the stout dame where she had fallen, he made good his escape, and though the plot was eventually discovered, no further steps were taken by the Portuguese authorities, nor was it even known what became of the unfortunate nun, but common report had it that she had been walled up alive.

To give anything like a complete description of Old Goa would fill too many pages of a work purporting to be a book on sport, and adventure only. I will, therefore, conclude my notes on the subject with a brief account of a curious and interesting ceremony performed annually in honour of the Patron Saint.

This great holiday of the year and festival of the Church in Goa, more important even than Easter, is the feast of Saint Zavier, when the Saint's mummified body is exposed in the cathedral. Goanese from all parts of India come to attend this solemn ceremony and join in the subsequent merry-making. The body is now confined in a glass coffin, and the congregation, as they file past it, stop to bow and cross themselves. It used formerly to be exposed

out of its coffin, but an enthusiastic souvenir-hunting white man having sacrilegiously purloined one of its big toes, the authorities no longer permit the body to be shown outside its case. I am writing of Goa and Mormugoa as I saw them some ten or more years ago, and they are probably unchanged to this day, though I fear my description falls far short of what it should be. But these places are so quaint, and full of interest from so many points of view, that it would require the skill of an expert guide-book writer to describe them.

* * * * * *

After my term of service at Dharwar, I was posted to the district of Poonah, one of the nicest in the Presidency, but from a police point of view, a most troublesome and responsible charge, for Poonah at that time was a hot-bed of sedition, the result, in a great measure, of the lenient treatment accorded to the promoters and instigators of the movement, years before, in Nasik, Benares and Calcutta.

But I have already referred to this subject in a previous chapter, and the least said now about those troublous days the better, for in the realization of her great opportunity for showing her true sentiments to the Empire, India has furnished evidence so complete and incontestable of her loyalty and devotion, that it is now difficult to realize that unrest and agitation ever had any existence in that country. War, as our enemies have discovered to their cost, so far from alienating India from the Empire, as they had hoped, has welded them so closely together that, for the first time in her history, the soldiers of the Empire, white and black alike, are fighting side by side against their common European foes. In fact, what war has effected in a moment, so to speak, a century of peace might have failed to bring about.

As Police Officer of Poonah during a period when unrest and sedition were so ripe in this city and district, my time was so fully occupied with my duties, that I had no leisure for sport, not that there was much to be had, a few black-buck and small game being all that was obtainable in this district.

From Poonah I was transferred to Surat, an interesting

station, which was described by Lord Curzon as "the cradle of the Indian Empire." The interest of the place lies in the battered forts, walls and gates of the city, remains of old Portuguese buildings, Dutch factories, and the curious medley of tombs in the old cemetery. Surat, originally owned and ruled by Nawabs, was finally ceded to the English Government in return for a heavy pecuniary consideration, or in other words, purchased by "John Company," probably at a bargain!

The family originally owning it had been for years divided into minor factions, each claiming seniority. One side of the house was represented, in my time, by an interesting, intelligent old lady of over eighty, known as the Begum.

In paying ceremonial visits to either side of the house, it was necessary to take great precautions in order to avoid giving offence to the other, and as the palace was common to both families, with the court-yards only separate, the paying of these visits was a somewhat delicate operation.

This division into two or more factions, is not at all unusual amongst families comprising the Indian nobility. Neither is it rare to find great jealousy existing between them. In the present instance the two families were extremely jealous of each other, and this feeling was no doubt greatly fostered by the underlings and hangers-on of each, for the Nawab, the head of the other faction, unlike the Begum, was a sensible, broad-minded individual who was sending his sons to England for a 'Varsity education!

The headquarters of the pearl trade is in Surat, the valuable rights of the fisheries in the Persian Gulf, once owned by a few merchants of native descent, being now vested in a syndicate run with European capital. The fisheries commence at the Island of Babreya, which lies off the Arab shore near the centre of the Persian Gulf, and continue for a distance of nearly a hundred miles.

The most productive shoals are between the Island of Atabool and the coast of Katar. Some of the pearls found are of great size and corresponding value. It is estimated that three-quarters of the world's supply of

pearls come from here. Hence the rights in these fisheries are necessarily of great value.

It is particularly interesting at the present time, to learn that the Germans have had their eye on these rights for many years. Their activities in this direction, in combination with their struggles for the railway facilities on the shores of the Persian Gulf, are graphically described in the "*Times* History of the Present War."

We paid a visit to the great pearl merchant in Surat, who is allowed a special guard and police protection from the Government, and occupies a fine mansion, of a semi-Italian and oriental style of architecture, in the suburbs at some distance from the town of Surat.

As he conducted us upstairs, we passed on the different landings several groups of men engaged in piercing holes in the pearls; they were each squatted in front of a machine and it was quite interesting to watch the skill and steadiness with which they conducted their operations.

In the first room we visited were some old men seated on the floor, each having what appeared to be a heap of sago in front of him which he was employed in sorting. These proved to be pearls in the rough which were being sorted out according to their condition as damaged or inferior in quality. As they seemed to be testing their quality almost entirely by touch, I asked the merchant how they could tell a good pearl from a bad one like that. "In the same way as the sahib finds out a thief," he replied, laughing, apparently much amused, either at my question or at his own conceit.

After this we went on to the polishing rooms, where again were men squatted with heaps of pearls before them, but this time they had on chamois leather gloves with which they were polishing the pearls. This process certainly improved their appearance, and the more they were rubbed the better they looked. Still, perhaps because of being in such large quantities, they did not give the impression of possessing any value.

However, when we finally came to the office, a kind of strong room where the finished specimens and threaded rows are kept, we could not fail to realize the real beauty of the gems. We handled one magnificent pear-shaped

specimen valued, we were told, at £4,000. Its size, in comparison to its value, seemed so insignificant that, feeling it might so easily be lost or stolen, I was much relieved to see it safely locked up again, and must have shown this in my face, for the merchant and his employee evidently noticed it, and, probably accustomed to handling pearls of even greater value daily, were seemingly much amused at my solicitude.

CHAPTER XXI

Decide on a shooting trip to Somaliland—Popular belief about its inhabitants—Erroneous ideas—Diminishing game—Collecting information—Preparations for the Expedition—Initial difficulties finally overcome—Calling for volunteers—Gungdya and Sabha come forward—A study in contrasts—Stores and equipment—My battery—Embark for Aden—The voyage—Its effect on the two Bhils—Explaining the compass—Arrive at Aden—Take passage to Berbera—Black beetles and noisy natives—Collecting a "Kafila"—Purchase baggage camels—Engaging an escort—Supplies and provisions—A desolate land—Drilling the escort—Abdi, the headman—His multifarious duties—The construction of zarebas—A camp in Somaliland described—Engage two shikaris—Khaliffa and Nur—Projects and plans—Unfriendly natives likely to be encountered—Confidence in Abdi—Troubles with camel men—Marching across a waterless plain—Somalis armed to the teeth—Wild appearance of these men—Decorated murderers—Weapons used in warfare—Somali women—Their dress and appearance—Not held in much account—Often abandoned on the march.

In the year 1893 I decided on making a private hunting expedition to Somaliland, a country which has always borne the reputation of being the home of a bigoted, ferocious, savage race whose hand is against every man.

Somaliland was, at the time I purposed visiting it, more or less a *terra incognita* to sportsmen, but it has since been opened out, with the result that the terrifying accounts of the dangers and difficulties of entering the country have proved to have been somewhat exaggerated.

As with all fresh hunting grounds, the advent of the sportsman has had the usual effect, and the number of wild animals formerly to be found there, has considerably diminished, though in the unexplored portions of the Haud and Ogadin game is still plentiful, especially lions.

Having collected all the information I could obtain regarding the country and completed preparations for my expedition, I applied to the Bombay Government through

the I.-G. Police for sanction to enter Somaliland through Aden, which is under the jurisdiction of the Government of Bombay.

I also applied to the Inspector-General of Police for sanction to take forty Sniders from the Police Headquarters Reserve with which to arm my escort, for owing to the reputed lawlessness of the country I purposed visiting, an armed escort was essentially necessary.

After some weeks' delay I received a curt demi-official reply from the I.-G. Police regretting that he was unable to accede to my wishes, but that he had forwarded my application to the Government for disposal.

This was not encouraging—especially as I had obtained the requisite leave of absence and had already made all my preparations for the expedition, assuming that permission would be granted and I should be able to start at once.

However, Lord H——, the then Governor of Bombay, a sportsman himself, and always anxious to encourage this spirit among his officers, came to my rescue, and not only sanctioned my expedition—subject to the approval of the Aden authorities—but issued a special resolution giving me the loan of forty Sniders and ammunition from the Aden arsenal.

As I was making the expedition alone—for I had no white companion—I was particularly anxious to take some of my own men with me. At the same time I felt it was expecting too much, and hardly reasonable to ask a Bhil to leave his home and family and to undertake a sea voyage to a country he had never seen or even heard of.

However, on my calling for volunteers Gungdya and Sabha, two of my best shikaris—of whom mention has already been made in previous chapters—both came forward at once and expressed their willingness to accompany me.

These men, as I have said elsewhere, were very different both in appearance and character, one being tall, thin, and dignified, and the other short, squat, and of a wild and reckless disposition, but a pluckier couple it would have been difficult to find, and though so different in character yet the best of friends and comrades.

I laid in a quantity of stores—far too much as I discovered later—consisting of tea, coffee, tinned butter, soups,

fish, etc., all packed in strong teak-wood boxes. Knowing the importance of carrying a supply of water, I had special water-casks constructed each to contain twelve gallons—two twelve-gallon casks being, as I knew, the full load of a camel. In the way of tents and camp equipment, I took a small double fly Cabul tent weighing 80 lbs., and an iron folding chair; a bed I had no need of as I usually slept on the ground, or on store boxes covered with camel mats, which also served the purpose of a table.

My sporting battery, the most important part of the outfit, consisted of—

1 Double 8-bore Paradox gun by Holland.
1 Double 12-bore Paradox gun by Holland.
1 Double 10-bore rifle by Dixon.
1 Double ·500 Express rifle by Rigby.
1 Double ·450 Express rifle by Cogswell and Harrison.
1 Lee Metford ·303.

The last I found quite useless against the larger antelope—such as the oryx, hartebeest, etc.—for it has little knocking down power unless the bullet happens to strike a vital spot.

A brace of revolvers, a hand camera and compass completed my outfit.

We took our passages for Aden on 15th March in the P. and O. s.s. *Macedonia*. The two Bhils, who had never seen the sea before, were greatly struck with, and also much impressed by, some battleships which happened to be lying in the harbour at the time.

We had a rough passage—very unusual at this time of the year—and finally reached Aden on the fifth day of the voyage. I was greatly amused at the numerous questions my men asked me; as to the navigation and mechanism of the ship—once they had recovered their equilibrium, for they had both been horribly sea-sick.

I tried to explain to them the uses of the compass, chart, etc., though my knowledge of such matters was not much greater than their own. However, they accepted all I said, but I fancy, from the hints they threw out, they quite believed that the wake of the steamer was the pathway to their destination.

On arrival at Aden I was met by my friend P——, of

the regiment I had been attached to before joining the police, and who was now on the staff. I stayed with him three days, which I took advantage of to replenish my stores.

We then took passage in a wretched little steamer to Berbera, which we reached on the third day, heartily glad to escape from that awful ship, with its vile food, black beetles, and noisy natives. The town of Berbera—if I may so term it—was composed of a few Arab rubble buildings, a fort and a large number of permanent Somali huts made of matting and poles.

Some three-quarters of a mile to the west is the new, official town—originally built by the Egyptians—the houses being of rubble and masonry, one storied, with flat roofs, not unlike those found in Sind. There is a good pier as well as a good lighthouse, also built by the Egyptians before we took over the north Somali coast from them, and an excellent harbour, affording adequate protection for large steamers. At a distance of about twenty-four miles east and west of Berbera the Maritime Range comes down to within a mile or two of the sea.

I remained in Berbera a week, getting together a caravan or "Kafila," with the assistance of the Political Agent, a very kind individual, whose temper I fear I much tried, but who very kindly put me up. I was also much assisted by an Arab merchant of the place by name Mahomed Hindi, a very decent fellow.

I purchased thirty baggage camels and engaged the same number of natives—drawn from the different tribes—as an escort, whom I armed with the Snider rifles so generously lent me by the Bombay Government.

I also purchased supplies of provisions—such as rice, dates, Ghee,* also cooking utensils, saddle equipment for the camels, cloth and beads as presents to the chiefs of the countries we were to pass through, axes for making zarebas, rope, etc., etc.

Besides these essentials, there were a number of other things to be thought of, for in the interior of Somaliland there were no permanent villages, the Karias being usually

* Clarified butter.

small, temporary kraals, and nothing is obtainable in the way of food excepting exceptionally rancid milk. Hence, rations for the men, personal luggage and stores, must all be carried on camels, and this constitutes a large caravan.

The newly-recruited escort, too, had to be put through a course of musketry and rough drill, such as advancing and retiring in skirmishing order, etc., etc. However, the Somali are brought up from childhood midst an atmosphere of raids and skirmishes. They soon grasped some idea of military movements.

Finally, the purchase of two horses for elephant and lion hunting completed my preparations. I was very fortunate in obtaining the services of one—Abdi—as headman or leader of the caravan, a most important and responsible position, for on his efficiency, or otherwise, depended in a great measure the success or failure of the expedition.

He must know Arabic or Hindustani, and his business is to superintend the loading of the camels, giving out the daily rations, interviewing chiefs and natives, who visit the camp, acting interpreter, etc., etc. He is also required to take military command of the caravan on the absence of his master, and in this capacity must arrange for the relief of the sentries at night and select the places where the zarebas are to be put up, etc.

The construction of zarebas, by the way, is by no means an easy matter, especially after a long march, for trees have to be felled and brushwood collected and placed round the camp in a circular formation, low enough to fire over, yet sufficiently deep to prevent a sudden rush being made on the encampment.

Towards evening the camels and horses are all collected and driven into this enclosure, the hunter's tent being erected in the centre, midst a seeming chaos of multifarious packages—bubbling of camels, neighing of horses, and the cheery groups of Somalis enjoying their frugal evening meal of rice and dates. Add to this the white-clad figure of the sentry, as he stands, rifle in hand, crooning to himself some wild and invariably mournful song; and we have as animated and picturesque a scene as it would be possible to imagine.

Then, as daylight wanes, comes the stillness of the

jungle, to be broken only by the melancholy cry of the jackal, the weird howl of the hyena, or, maybe, the grand roar of a lion on the prowl, borne along the still night air—a situation like this is difficult to describe, but to the true sportsman the fascination of it will doubtless be apparent.

In addition to my camel men, amongst whom were some good shikaris, I engaged two elephant hunters—Khaliffa and Nur—the former of whom was destined to give considerable trouble later on. These, together with a cook and butler, completed my staff.

As I was anxious to penetrate as far as possible into the interior in search of elephants, I decided, in consultation with my headman, to visit the Gadabursi and Esai country, where elephants were reported to be very numerous. I also intended, if time permitted, to make a trip to Abyssinia whence reports of the abundance and variety of game had excited my imagination.

On mentioning my project to Captain A——, he did his best to dissuade me from entering that part of the country as the unfriendliness of the natives was causing much anxiety at the time, and suggested instead a mild little tour round Berbera.

But as my outlay on the expedition was already considerable, I determined, notwithstanding A——'s friendly advice, to stick to my original plan, explaining to that exasperated official that if I should happen to be attacked by the natives I could but run away.

Nevertheless, I quite realized that a certain amount of risk must be incurred from the possible hostility of the Esa and other savage tribes, but hoped that a long experience of natives, the strong and reliable following under Abdi, who had proved his eminent fitness as a caravan leader in similar expeditions, would reduce the dangers to a minimum.

The last few hours at Berbera were, I remember, spent in losing and finding my camel men, and I am afraid we gave Captain A—— a very worrying time. However, everything being fixed up at last, we started off one morning at daybreak, for the first long march of sixteen miles across the waterless Maritime plain.

On our way we occasionally met with small parties of

MY CAMP IN ELEPHANT COUNTRY.
(Harawa Valley.)

[*To face p.* 166.

Somalis, armed to the teeth with spear and shield, etc., making their way to the coast, their strings of camels laden with skins of camels, goats, etc., for which they find a ready market in Berbera.

The Somali of the interior is a wild enough looking creature, with a piece of cotton sheeting wrapped about the body, his hair—short and curly—bleached a light red, or plastered with white clay. Many of the men wear a leather charm containing a verse from the Koran round their necks—for the Somalis are all Mussulmans and of the Shafai sect.

Among certain tribes, any man who has killed another —presumably in battle ?—wears an ostrich feather in his hair. The spears they use are most deadly-looking weapons, horribly barbed. A heavy spear with laurel-leaf shaped blade is used for close quarters, for the Somalis usually fight on foot, and when charging their foe, use this spear to stab with as they close. The women wear a dark blue, nondescript sort of garment, displaying a good deal of the bosom. The married woman ties up her hair in a piece of blue cloth, while the young girls, " Gubats " or maidens, wear theirs in oily looking plaits.

Women generally, and more especially when old and decrepit, are of very little account among the Somali. If unable to keep up with the Kafila on the march, they are often abandoned and left lying exhausted on the side of the road, either to follow as best they can or to be devoured by a hungry lion, should one happen to pass that way.

CHAPTER XXII

An uninviting country—Gazelles occasionally met with—Early morning marches—The dik-dik antelope—Large herds seen—The klipspringer—Terrific heat—The Nasiya or Shelter tree—Reach the first water—Lion-hand mountain—The lesser koodoo—Their appearance and habits—Extraordinary leaping powers—Shoot a fine buck—Ascending the Golis Range—Haunt of the greater koodoo—News of an old bull—A fruitless search—Returning to camp—A pleasant surprise—Sudden appearance of the bull—A long shot—Bagged—A splendid trophy—The greater koodoo described—We march *en route* to Hargesa—Wild wooded country—Oryx and hartebeest encountered—Shooting for the pot—Many mouths to feed—The oryx, appearance and habits—A herd of four hundred seen—Wounded oryx dangerous—Bushmen's method of killing these animals—Poisoned arrows and dogs—Uses made of the skins—The hartebeest—Several species—Fine texture of coats—Peculiarity of the skull—Vast herds often met with—The inquisitiveness of these animals—Indifference to thirst—The sommering gazelle—Very common in Somaliland—A herd of one thousand—Peculiar characteristic—Variety in shape of horns—Subject to parasitical maggots—Flesh uneatable.

THE country over which we travelled was not inviting, consisting as it did of bare hills and sandy plains covered with stunted mimosa bushes, affording shelter to an occasional gazelle, a number of which I shot on the way.

This peculiar gazelle is readily distinguished by the well-developed ridge of loose skin over the nose. The general colour is a brownish fawn, with a dark lateral band. The coat is also longer and the horns thicker and more curved than those of the lowland gazelle. The height at the shoulder is twenty-four inches. The females have no horns.

They go about in small herds of three to five, and are found in scrub, jungle and rocky ground. In their habits they are very much like the Indian gazelle or chinkara, and offer excellent practice for the rifle.

In the cool of the early mornings, when on the march, I usually walked through the jungle—ahead of the string of camels, with my gun—often disturbing the little sand antelope, which would spring away through the bushes at my approach.

The sakaro, or dik-dik, as they are called by the Somalis, is, I believe, the smallest of the African antelope tribes, and stands about the size of a hare. The general colour is a rufus-fawn with a tuft of hair on the crown of the head. The eyes are large and the horns corrugated at the base, strongly pointed and from one to three inches in length. The females are even smaller and carry no horns.

These pretty little antelopes are very common in Somaliland, and I have seen as many as a hundred in the course of a long march. They frequent scrub and aloe jungle, and when disturbed give a shrill whistle of alarm. Sakaro antelopes can be easily knocked over with No. 5 shot, and make pretty shooting with a rook rifle.

The klipspringer would also be seen along the rocky paths and are very common in the Golis Range. Its height at the shoulder is about twenty inches, and it is in colour an olive-grey. The hair on coat is long and brittle, not unlike that of the musk deer. The hoofs are cylindrical and cup-shaped underneath; the horns rise vertically from the head, with a slightly forward curvature and are ringed from the basal thud; average length being about two and a half inches. The females have no horns. These antelope go about in twos and threes. They are excellent eating. As we marched on the heat became terrific, and we were glad when, at last, we reached a small tree called "Nasiya," the word meaning "resting-place," whence, after taking a short rest we pushed on again reaching the next water, Deregodab, twenty-three miles from Berbera; and continuing our journey went on to Mandera, a valley three miles wide under the Gadabarsi * mountain, a bluff of the great Golis Range.

At Mandera, and all along the foot of the Golis Range, is dense forest of the large Guda thorn tree, with thick undergrowth of aloes and thorny bushes, a favourite resort of the lesser koodoo.

* Literally, "Lion-hand mountain."

This animal is, to my mind, the most beautiful in Somaliland. It stands about three feet five inches at the shoulder, and is of a slate-blue colour, turning to almost black in the older animals. From the back descend snow-white stripes upon either flank and hindquarters. Inside the thighs and arms the hair is of a reddish tinge. The legs are slender and beautifully shaped, hoofs long, narrow and pointed. The tail is broad, white and bushy. The head is small with a bar of white below each of the eyes, which are large and beautiful, and a few white spots on either cheek. The ears are large, round and wonderfully sensitive. The neck is slightly maned and well-developed, with a splash of white on the throat; in fact, taken altogether, the colouring of this antelope is remarkably effective. The horns are like those of the greater koodoo—spiral, but do not attain the enormous length of the latter, the average measurement of a lesser koodoo horn being about twenty-eight inches round the curve, though I have shot one with twenty-nine and a half round the curve, but this was the longest I obtained. The does are of a lighter colour and devoid of horns.

The lesser koodoo are found in dense bush and aloe clumps. They go about in herds of about five and six. Their power of leaping is extraordinary, and it is a very pretty sight to see them take the bushes at great bounds. I had great luck with these antelope at Mandera, where I shot some very fine buck.

But to resume. We now ascended the Golis Range, walking half-way up the mountain, where there was a spring of clear water, to hunt for greater koodoo. Hearing there was a very old koodoo bull on this hill, I determined to devote the whole day in search of him. I had, on the previous day, shot a couple of good buck out of a herd; but as this particular animal was reported to carry an exceptionally fine head, I was very keen on getting him.

Accompanied by two of my trackers—Nur and Khaliffa, with one Easa Musa as guide—we searched along the lower slopes and higher ridges of the mountain, from early morning until late in the afternoon, but saw no sign of him.

I had numerous opportunities during the day of shooting other animals—one fine old wart-hog in particular—but

LESSER KOODOO BULL.
(Africa.)

WALLER'S GAZELLE.
(Africa.)

[*To face p.* 170.

would not fire for fear of disturbing the beast we were after. Luck, however, was against me, I was tired and disappointed. Early in the day I had run an aloe spike into my leg—I always shoot with legs and arms bare—and was suffering much pain.

Finally, it became time to turn homewards, when, as we were walking along a ridge of the hill overlooking our camp, on mounting a spur we suddenly saw the beast below us, feeding on some mimosa bushes, hardly two yards off! He saw us too, for he raised his splendid head, crowned with a magnificent set of horns, the wide spirals showing to advantage by the light of the evening sun.

Before I could raise my rifle, however, the koodoo swung round and, giving a great bound forward, dashed down the slope of the ravine. He paused, however, halfway down, and suddenly turning to the left, galloped at full speed past, and parallel to, the ridge on which we stood.

The distance was about one hundred and fifty yards—so, taking a full sight and aiming well in front, I pressed the trigger. The mighty beast ran on some twenty yards, then stood under a small tree, swaying from side to side, and I knew now that my bullet had found a vital spot.

He was still breathing when we went up to him, poor beast, so to end his sufferings I put another bullet into him. He was a splendid old bull, scarred all over with many a scar received in fights with his own species.

The head of this animal carefully prepared by Rowland Ward, the well-known Piccadilly naturalist, is a gem amongst my large collection of Indian and African trophies. Excepting the eland, the greater koodoo is the largest of African antelopes. The average height of a full-grown bull is about thirteen and a half hands at the shoulders.

The colouring is mouse-grey, darkening to slate-blue in older animals. Along the spine runs a white list, and from this thin white stripes—seven or ten in number—extending transversely across the body. Under each eye is a white band, meeting in front of the jaw, and on the cheeks two or three irregular white spots.

The head is small and game-like, eyes large and brilliant, and the ears full, round and very sensitive. From the

throat extends a long beard, or fringe, of silvery grey hair, giving the animal a most imposing appearance. The neck is also slightly maned. The legs are slender, but strong and well-shaped.

The horns are massive and spiral, and of a corkscrew-like formation, terminating in sharp points. They have been known to exceed sixty inches round the curve. The largest pair secured by me measured fifty inches outside the curve—thirty-eight and a half in a straight line—ten inches circumference, and thirty-six and a half inches between the tips. The females have no horns.

Koodoos frequent the mountains and rocky, bush-covered hills. They keep together in small herds of six to eight. Solitary old bulls may occasionally be met, as was the case in the instance just quoted.

Although a heavy animal, the koodoo is a good climber, and his sense of hearing being, as I have said, so acute he is very difficult to approach. As far as I am aware no live specimen of this animal has yet reached the Zoological Gardens.

After a few days' rest we marched to Hargesa, my intention being to push on as fast as possible to the Harawa Valley, some two hundred miles distant, where I intended to form a permanent camp for the purpose of hunting elephants. Hargesa is situated on two important caravan routes, one from Ogadin and the other from Berbera. It is full of blind and lame people under the protection of one Sheik Muttar and his Mullahs.

We now found ourselves in a well-wooded country amongst rocky hills and mimosa bush, interposed with extensive grassy plains where large herds of oryx, hartebeest and sommering gazelles were constantly to be seen, and would often stand gazing with extraordinary inquisitiveness at our long string of camels.

I shot a large number of these animals as, my caravan being a large one, I had many mouths to feed. As a description of these antelopes may be of interest to the reader, I will describe them briefly in the order named.

The oryx, to take the first, is widely distributed over Somaliland. The clown-like markings of this animal are too well known to need description. The height of the

bull at the shoulder is about four feet, and its weight about 500 lbs.

The average length of the horns, which are straight, tapering and well-annulated, is about thirty-two inches in a bull, and thirty-four in a cow, the horns of the bull being shorter but more massive, especially close to the base.

Bulls and cows are so very alike in appearance that it is very difficult to distinguish one from the other in a herd—the bull is, perhaps, a little stouter and heavier about the neck and withers. The oryx inhabits stony ground and grass plains, and is often found far from water. They go about in herds of from five to fifty, but single bulls are occasionally met with.

On one occasion whilst crossing an open base, or prairie, my caravan started a herd of some four hundred oryx, which galloped past us, having all the appearance of a squadron of cavalry. Firing at the galloping line, I rolled over a fine buck. Being very keen of sight, and living mostly in the open, oryx are difficult to stalk. When wounded and brought to bay they not infrequently charge.

I once saw a wounded oryx make a most determined charge at one of my men who was trying to spear him as he stood at bay in some thick bushes.

On another occasion I was galloping after an oryx cow, which I had slightly wounded, when she turned suddenly and charged with her head down, upsetting my horse and giving me a nasty fall. The Bushmen, or Midgaons, who are armed with bows and poisoned arrows, hunt the oryx with dogs. The skin of these animals is very thick, especially about the neck and withers, and is much sought after by the Somalis for making shields, etc.

The hartebeest. There are several species of this animal, chiefly distinguishable from each other by their horns, which vary greatly in shape and size. The horns of the Abyssinian and Somali hartebeest have a wider spread than those of the South African varieties, which are closer together and more upright and massive at the base.

The height of the Somali beast is about forty-seven inches at the shoulder, and weight about 400 lbs. In colour it is chestnut, deepening to black about the shoulders and upper part of the forelegs; also the face,

which is long and narrow. The nostrils are large and valvular, eyes large, ears narrow with their inner surface white. The shoulder is heavy and powerful, but the forequarters are poor and droop away. The tail is long and tufted black. The texture of the coat is exceedingly fine, and in the sunlight glistens like that of a well-groomed horse.

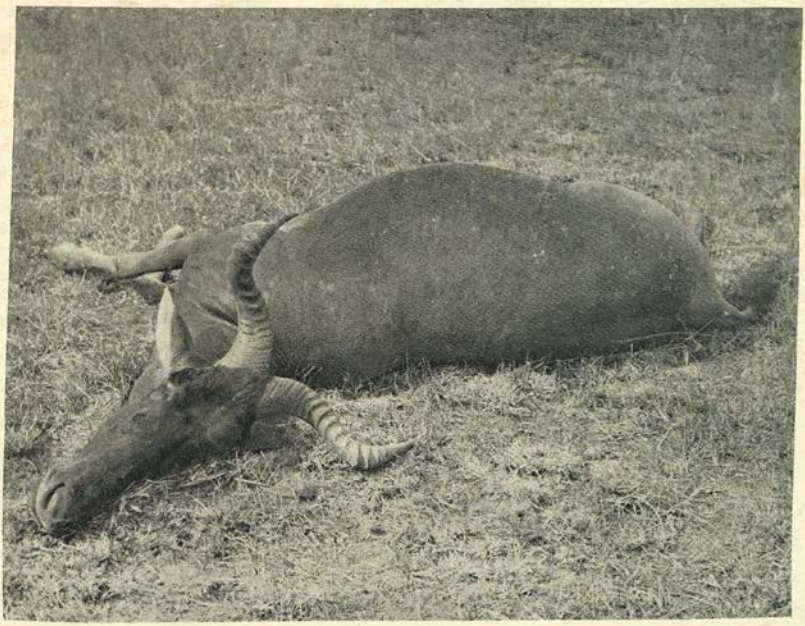
The chief peculiarity of this animal is in its skull, which rises about four inches above the brain cavity, and is quite separate from the cranium.

Hartebeest are found on open grass plains and thorn jungles. They feed principally on grass. I have met vast herds of these animals south of the Golis Range. They are extremely inquisitive beasts and have frequently followed my caravan, halting occasionally within two hundred yards to gaze at it. Like the majority of African antelopes, they can exist for several days without water.

The sommering gazelle is very common in Somaliland, and I have seen vast herds of over one thousand on the plains of the Haud. He stands about thirty to thirty-six inches. The general colour is fawn, the face markings being well-defined and nearly black. The peculiar characteristic of this animal is the white rump, which can be seen at a long distance. The horns vary in shape, and are often wanting in symmetry, being generally lyrate, the point turning inwards and forwards. The average length is about fourteen inches; the largest pair I secured was fourteen and a half.

Like most of the African antelopes, they are subject to a peculiar parasitical worm or maggot, which bores through the flesh and is found below the skin, setting up a local inflammation and making the meat uneatable. This gazelle is quite as inquisitive as the hartebeest.

ORYX BULL.
(Airfca.)



HARTEBEEST. [*To face p.* 174.
(Africa.)

CHAPTER XXIII

The Girnook or Waller gazelle—Where found—A giraffe-like antelope—Extraordinary length of neck—Small herds—Difficult to approach—long neck—Halt at Hargesa—March continued—A.. Our zareba at night—A lion prowling around—We hear bu see him—The lion's call—Next morning search—Marked down—B ng through the grass—My first lion—A splendid specimen—Lions and tigers compared—Difference in skulls—Game plentiful—Two more lions sighted—Gallop in pursuit—A savage charge—Chased for one hundred yards—I shoot the lion—In pursuit of the other—Crouched in a patch of grass—A snap-shot—My third lion!—Raiding Somalis met with—A lioness and cubs—I shoot the mother—Escape of the cubs—Man-eating lions common—A woman carried off—Tracking up the man-eater—I fail to locate him—Shoot a cock ostrich—Bushmen wonderful trackers—A hunter killed by a wild elephant—Torn limb from limb—Too light a rifle—Difference between Asiatic and African elephants—Latter superior in size—A herd of a hundred—Most dangerous of African game—Tenacity of life extraordinary—Skull curiously protected—The temple shot preferable—Not always successful—A male and female wounded—Curious results of shots from 8-bore Paradox.

I WAS also lucky enough, on this march, to secure some good specimens of the Girnook or Waller gazelle. This curious, giraffe-like antelope is found throughout East Africa. The colour is a rufus-fawn, with a broad dark band running down the middle of the back. Height at the shoulder about forty-two inches, and weight 116 lbs.

Horns are ridged and curved forward at the tips, where the ridges end. The females have no horns. The skull is massive and extends far back behind the ears. The neck, the distinguishing feature of this animal, is long, and eyes large like those of the giraffe.

The Girnook feeds on bushes, and, like the Indian goat, may be seen browsing, standing on its hind legs to reach the more tender shoots. They are found in small herds in scattered bush and ravines. The average length of their

horns is thirteen inches, and the largest I obtained was fourteen and a half round the curve.

Girnook are the most difficult antelopes to approach that I know of, their enormously long neck enabling them to see over bushes to a considerable distance. When disturbed they run through the bush with head down and long neck stretched straight out.

This completes the list of the three varieties of antelope which I shot on our march to Hargesa, where we halted for the night. The next morning, after much hand-shaking with, and presents of cloth, etc., to the Sheik Muttar and his Mullahs, we continued our journey, halting at Arabsea, which we reached without meeting with many adventures worth recording.

Our stay here, however, was marked by an event of some importance, for it was while encamped at this place that I had the good luck to bag my first lion which, as in the case of my first tiger, recorded in Chapter III., I was fortunate enough to secure with one shot.

Our zareba at this camp had been very carefully constructed of felled trees and thorny bushes, both as a protection against wild beasts and possible raid from hostile tribes. It was at night—which I remember was a very dark and stormy one—that the lion came prowling round the zareba, and continued for some time to patrol the circuit of the camp, occasionally betraying his presence by low, rumbling growls or deep, guttural sighs. It is difficult to define, accurately, the noise a lion makes on such occasions.

We could not see to shoot owing to the intense darkness outside the fence, and the bright light of our fires within the camp. Whether the lion had meditated attacking the zareba and was put off by the brightness of our fires, I cannot say. At any rate, after a time he took himself off.

The next morning early we took up his tracks—which were plainly visible in the soft sand all round us—and following through dense bushes, interspersed with sandy glades, finally marked the beast down in a patch of long grass.

Telling the men to form line and walk through this grass, I took up my position by the side of an ant-hill, which,

A SOMMERING GAZELLE.
(Africa.)

GAZELLE NASO.
(Africa.)

[*To face p.* 176.

in Africa, are often of great height. The men could not have advanced very far through the grass when out walked the lion, at about twelve paces to my right. I fired at once, rolling him over with a bullet through the shoulder.

He was a very large beast with a remarkably fine mane, a rich black on the shoulder, and deep yellow on the breast and head, giving to the animal a truly noble appearance. When emerging from the cover he had stood for a moment, with his massive, mane-encircled head well raised. I thought, as I caught sight of him, how majestic and dignified he looked. There was an absence of that peculiar feline ferocity which, though it adds to the formidable appearance of the tiger, detracts so much from its nobility. Nevertheless, the lion, if followed up when wounded, is a formidable enough antagonist, though not, in my opinion, so cunning, ferocious, or dangerous as a tiger. Although as fond of dense retreats as the latter, he exposes himself more carelessly, thus rendering his destruction comparatively more easy.

But the habits and peculiarities of the lion have all been so well-described by Mr. Selous in his most interesting book, "African Nature Notes and Reminiscences," that I will not attempt to enlarge on them. One point I may mention, however, for it may not perhaps be generally known, viz., that the skull of the lion, though quite equal in size, is considerably flatter at the base than that of the tiger.

To give a detailed account of each of the eight lions and thirty odd elephants I shot during my trip to Somaliland, would not only fill more space than I can spare, but might also prove tedious to the ordinary reader. I propose, therefore, to relate only the most interesting and exciting of my adventures with these animals.

Game was very plentiful at Arabsea, the whole country being covered with green grass a foot or more in height. And here—as elsewhere in Somaliland—I have come across lions in the open when out looking for other game. Indeed, their boldness in this respect is quite remarkable when compared with the stealthy, skulking methods adopted by tigers, as the following incident—only one of many I could quote—will show.

Some days after, bagging my first lion, I was riding about the country accompanied by Nur, looking for game, when I saw in the distance two animals which, at first sight, I took to be hartebeest, but soon discovered they were lions. They were walking slowly, one behind the other, over an open grassy plain.

As we galloped towards the pair, one of them, a dark-skinned beast, suddenly whipped round and, with an angry roar, charged most savagely, chasing me for about a hundred yards, when he pulled up. Wheeling round quickly, I jumped off and fired into his chest, rolling him over growling.

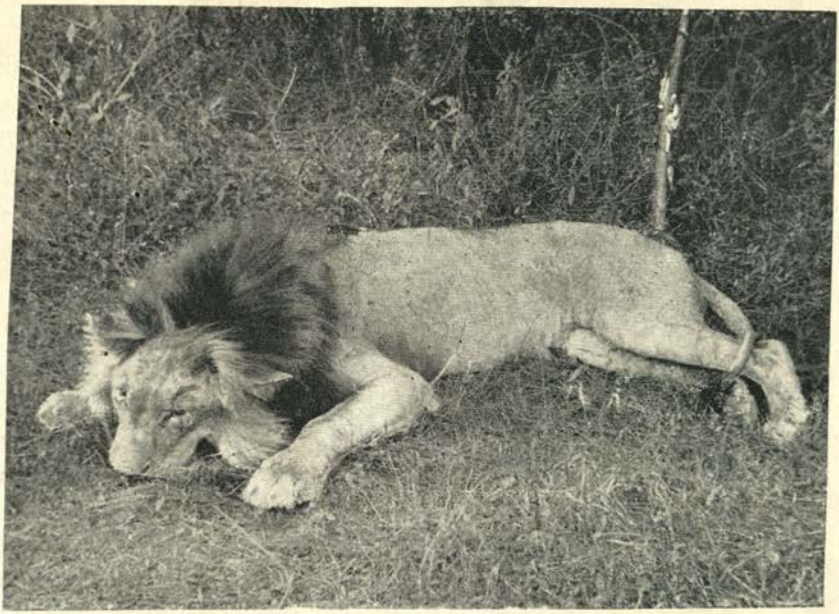
The next instant I was in the saddle again, going hard in the direction the other lion had taken when, suddenly, Nur, who had been following me closely, drew my attention to the beast crouching in a patch of high grass some five yards to my left.

I had almost ridden past him. Pulling up with a jerk, I took a snap-shot at his great shock head, for he was flicking his tail, from which I knew he was on the point of charging. Luckily my bullet, striking fairly between his eyes, killed him on the spot. Yet, so life-like did he appear —for he still lay crouching as he had been, with his head between his paws—that I fired again. But he had been killed with the first shot, the bullet of pure lead from my Rigby having crashed through his brain and penetrated the chest, raking him along the flank.

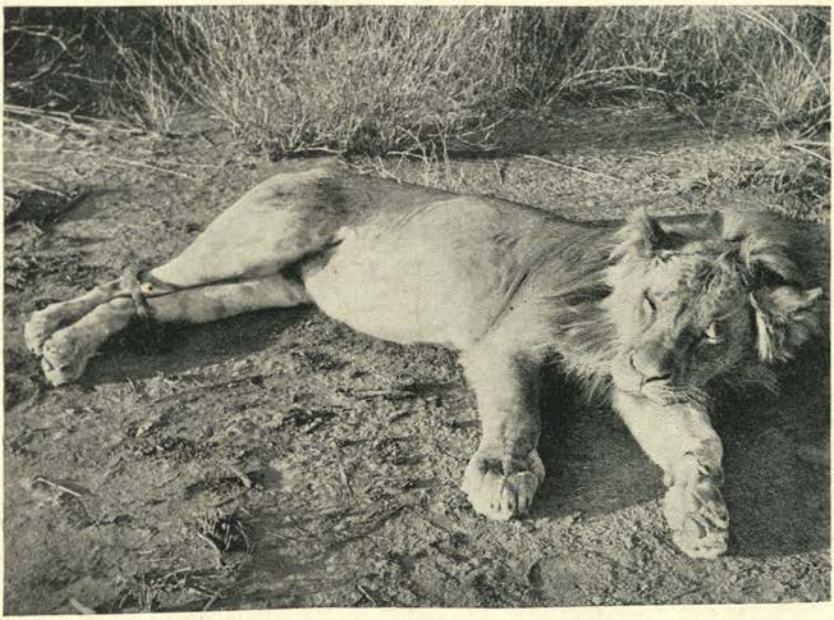
On going back to the first lion, we found him still alive. He had dragged himself into a small bush, and on our approaching him, greeted us with a savage roar. However, a bullet in the neck soon put an end to him. Both the lions were fine, handsome animals, with very fair manes.

On returning to camp that evening through a wild piece of country, we fell in with a party of raiders who, with loud shouts and a great flourish of spears, came galloping up to us, but seeing we were armed, quickly made off again. They were all well mounted and fairly bristling with spears.

One afternoon while stalking oryx in some bushes, we suddenly came on a lioness and her three-quarter grown cubs. Unfortunately we had left our horses in camp that



BLACK-MANED LION.
(Africa.)



MY FIRST LION. [*To face p.* 178.
(Africa.)

day, or might have scored a big success. As soon as the lions saw us they trotted on a few yards ahead and lay down in a patch of high grass.

Accompanied by my two men, Nur and Sabha, I walked up to them, and when within a dozen paces or so, the lioness put up her head with a growl. I fired immediately, knocking her over dead, with a bullet through the neck.

At this shot the cubs bounded away, and though I ran my best after them they managed to reach a strip of thorny jungle and we never saw them again. Had we been mounted we should probably have bagged the whole family.

Man-eating lions are common in parts of Somaliland. Like the tiger, he is extremely cunning and rapid in his movements, consequently quite as difficult to locate and destroy as the man-eating monster found in the jungles of India. In this connection it is interesting to note that lions generally, when attacking their prey, seize their victim in much the same manner as a tiger, but instead of taking the first mouthful from the buttock like the tiger, he invariably tears the belly open, commencing his meal on the liver, kidneys and other choice parts.

While I was journeying through the Gadabarsi country, a lioness carried off a woman from a Karia * close to my encampment. The body of the woman was discovered next morning about a hundred yards from the scene of the tragedy.

The attack had been a very bold one, the brute having deliberately forced his way into the zareba and dragged the woman out, in spite of a shower of spears, hurled at him by the would-be rescuers of his victim. The body, when found, exhibited amongst other injuries, several deep fang-wounds in the throat, and the right leg had been bitten off at the hip.

Taking two of my best trackers with me, we followed up the tracks of the lioness for several miles over most difficult ground covered with dense bush and grass, but were finally obliged to abandon the pursuit, returning to camp, which we reached some hours after darkness had set in.

* Small temporary kraal.

The next morning, being joined by some of the Gadabarsi elephant hunters, well mounted on excellent ponies, we scoured the country for miles in search of the man-eater, but failed to locate her. From her footprints, which at first I mistook for a leopard's, she must have been quite a small beast.

I spent several days in these pleasant wilds, during which time I bagged many oryx and hartebeest, also a very fine cock ostrich. It was here, too, that I first met with the Midgaons, or Bushmen, two of whom joined my camp. They are an extremely hardy and primitive race still using bows and poisoned arrows, and are wonderful trackers.

When hunting all day over extensive bushy plains, it was extraordinary how these men, who acted as my guides, would find their way through the labyrinth when there was neither path, track nor landmark of any kind apparent.

One of the men I had engaged was with the late Mr. Ingram, when the latter met his death from an elephant. It appears that he was encamped at a spot not far from my camp, and being at the time laid up with a sore heel, was confined to his tent.

The rest of the party had gone out, when some Somalis, who had been grazing the baggage camels, came running up to tell him that there was an elephant close to the camp. To a true sportsman like Ingram this was an opportunity not to be neglected.

Quickly saddling his horse he rode off, armed with a ·450 Express—the only weapon left in camp. He fired at the elephant, whereupon the beast immediately charged. Ingram wheeled his horse round and would no doubt have got away, but the animal refused to face the spiky line of aloes in front of him. The next instant the enraged brute was upon Ingram, and sweeping him off the saddle with his trunk tore him limb from limb.

The rifle he had used was, as I have said, a ·450 Express which, with its light hollow bullet, is obviously unsuited for such a thick-skinned animal as an elephant. In fact, accidents of this kind which, unfortunately, so often happen even to experienced hunters of dangerous game, may

generally be traced to the sportsman having used a light rifle when a heavier weapon should have been employed.

And now to relate some of my own experiences with elephants in Somaliland. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to give a description of this animal, since he differs so materially from what may be called the ordinary type of elephant, viz., those that inhabit India or Ceylon.

The African elephant is distinguishable from the Asiatic species, firstly, by the remarkable size and expanse of the ears which, when thrown back, completely cover the shoulders; secondly, the presence of well-developed tusks in both male and female alike; thirdly, the formation of the head—the forehead being convex instead of concave; fourthly, the hollow back—the back of the Indian elephant being convex and the shoulder considerably lower.

The African elephant is also vastly superior in size and possesses greater speed than the Asiatic variety, the tusks vary in size and weight according to the locality in which the animal is found.

In Abyssinia and Somaliland, for example, the tusks are much smaller than those found in the centre of the continent. It is seldom that a pair of tusks are alike, for as a man uses the right hand in preference to the left, so the elephant, by using one tusk more than the other, it becomes naturally more worn. The tusks are solid only for a portion of their length—being hollow throughout the imbedded portion.

The elephant feeds on creepers, aloes, and the succulent roots of the mimosa and other trees. He is a wasteful feeder, tearing down branches, half of which he leaves untouched.

A herd usually consists of from thirty to fifty individuals, though once, in the Harawa Valley, I saw one of over one hundred.

Although possessing very bad sight, the elephant has an exquisite sense of smell. He can wind an enemy at a considerable distance, provided the breeze is favourable.

I have encountered elephants, both from horseback and on foot, and consider them the most dangerous of all African game. They are exceedingly savage when wounded

and possess an extraordinary tenacity of life. The peculiar formation of the skull protects the brain, thus rendering the forehead shot very uncertain; whereas in the Asiatic variety such a shot is instantly fatal.

On the other hand, if a side or temple shot is offered by an elephant standing quite still, the brain may be easily reached if the bullet is well placed—*i.e.*, on the outer edge of the central portion of the ear. The shoulder shot is also very effective, provided a heavy rifle is used, for should the heart be missed the lungs would be pierced, and the animal rendered helpless at once.

I remember on one occasion I had severely wounded a bull elephant; the ball catching him high up on the shoulder-blade had rendered him instantly dead lame. Anxious to try the effect of a forehead shot, I ran up to within ten yards of him, and aiming for the forehead, fired a right and left, both bullets striking him within an inch of each other directly below the eyes.

However, beyond recoiling at the shots, he did not appear much the worse for the stunning effects of the metal. I was using an 8-bore Paradox, and I had eventually to kill him with the temple shot!

On another occasion, a female elephant I had wounded suddenly wheeled round and charged. I fired when she was about nine paces distant, aiming below the boss or projection above the trunk, killing her instantly; and this with the same gun, 8-bore Paradox, which had failed to floor the bull elephant!

It would have been interesting had I preserved them to have examined the skulls of the two animals, which I regret I did not think of doing. Possibly, in the case of the bull elephant, I may not have made sufficient allowance for the position of the brain and have gone a trifle high.

The brain of an African elephant rests upon a plate of bone exactly above the roots of the upper grinders. It is thus wonderfully protected from the front shot as it is so low that the ball invariably passes over it.

BULL ELEPHANT.
(Africa.)

THE SLEEP OF DEATH.
(African Bull Elephant.)

To face p. 182.

CHAPTER XXIV

We strike camp—Arrive in elephant country—An attempted mutiny in camp—One black sheep in the flock—Armed, literally to the teeth—Alarming situation—Drastic measures necessary—I threaten to shoot the ring-leader—A critical moment—Cocking my rifle turns the scale—Order restored—Jungles teeming with game—Herd of elephants reported—Preparation for the attack—In the midst of the herd—Shoot one of them—Habe-Awal and Gadabarsi horsemen surround the herd—Jungle alive with elephants—I kill five bulls and one cow—Fine haul of tusks—Continue hunt next morning—At unpleasantly close quarters—Under the elephant's trunk—Saved by standing still—The elephant moves off—A parting shot in the ribs—Follow up and finish her—Shoot another bull—Bivouac for the night—Lion heard calling—News of a large bull—Found and wounded—A determined charge—Retires into a jungle—At bay—I hit him again—Another charge—I am chased and nearly caught—I give him the slip—Return to camp—Take up tracks next day—Found dead—Move camp—Six elephants bagged one day—Charged by a cow elephant—A Somali attracts her attention—She chases him—He is caught and killed instantly—Pounded beyond recognition—I kill the elephant—We try but fail to capture the calf.

We now struck camp, and marching through an unexplored portion of the Gadabarsi country towards the Harawa Valley, camped at Leakat, whence I sent mounted men in all directions in search of khubbar of elephants. But before going on to relate my adventures, I must tell of an incident which had come perilously near to ending my expedition.

I had been noticing for some time that Khaliffa—one of my principal hunters—thoroughly aware of his own importance as an unequalled tracker—seemed to be dissatisfied, and though he had not done anything sufficiently pronounced to call for comment on my part, his manner was sulky and not a good or cheering example to the rest of the men.

Now, on an expedition of this kind, it goes without

saying that it is essential there should be general good-fellowship between master and men, and throughout the camp. This I had endeavoured to establish, with the result that often on my return to the camp after a lucky day's sport my smiling Somalis would clap me on the back saying, "Good chap! Good chap!"—being all the English they possessed—then dance round me clapping their hands in the exuberance of their glee.

On the other hand, if we had failed to secure some wounded animal, or had had a poor day's sport, their disappointment seemed to be as keen as my own, and they would show their sympathy by many attentive little actions.

There was destined to be, however, an unpleasant, and what might have proved tragic break in these harmonious relations; for, returning one evening from a long day's chase after oryx, I was met by my head man Abdi, who, evidently in a great state of excitement and apprehension, reported that Khaliffa had mutinied and was deserting the camp with some of his tribesmen. Telling Abdi to keep quiet and not cause any further excitement among the men, I walked into the zareba. Here I found Khaliffa, armed with a rifle and a bundle of cartridges, held between his teeth, leading one of my camels laden with provisions. On asking him what he intended doing, he spat on the ground, and, looking sullenly around, beckoned to some of his tribesmen, who, all armed too, were standing near, to follow him.

There being no doubt as to his intentions, I determined to squash the mutiny, for such it seemed to be, by taking prompt and drastic measures—knowing that any delay, or weakness on my part, would be fatal, and had quite made up my mind that if this was to be the end of the expedition, it should also be the ending of Khaliffa's career.

Acting on this resolution, I picked up a twig from the ground, and throwing it some distance from me towards the entrance to the zareba, I told him that if he dared to pass this twig I would shoot him on the spot—which I certainly would have done. Hearing the click of my rifle as I put it to full cock, he fell back, whereupon we promptly disarmed him.

The question was now: What to do with him? We were a long way from the coast, and to send him back to Berbera under escort, would mean weakening my caravan. It was a difficult problem to solve; however, after expending on him my choicest vocabulary of abuse, I made a great show of magnanimity and forgave him! As he gave no further trouble throughout the expedition, I could only conclude that he had been duly impressed by the action I had taken.

But to return to my camp at Leakat; we found the jungles here teeming with game, and saw large herds of oryx, hartebeest and sommering gazelles almost daily, but being after nobler game we left all these animals severely alone.

One morning about eight o'clock one of my tracker scouts rode in to say that his party had struck the spoor of a large herd of elephants, some six miles off. We saddled up at once and, following our guide, came on the herd, consisting of some sixty individuals, in a thick forest of the largest kind of thorn trees, with gnarled stems and branches, in an undergrowth of grass and aloes.

We were a large party of ten horsemen of the Habe Awal and Gadabarsi tribe, beside my own two men, Gungdya and Sabha. As we reined in at the edge of the forest, we heard the snapping of branches, and the peculiar low, rumbling noise elephants make when feeding, in the dense covert in front of us.

Taking Khaliffa, the reformed, and Sabha with me, I cautiously crept forward and suddenly found myself in the midst of the herd. Firing at the largest elephant—which unfortunately turned out to be a cow—I brought her down with a shot in the temple.

The horsemen now surrounded the herd and formed a cordon round them. It was very exciting work as these wild-looking riders, brandishing their spears dashed forward at headlong speed regardless of thorn trees and bushes, and circling round the now infuriated animals prevented them from breaking out of the ring.

The jungle seemed alive with elephants, rushing singly or in groups of five or six in all directions, intent only on escaping. I had killed five bulls with shoulder and temple

shots, and was thinking of calling off the horsemen as there did not seem to be any more large animals left, when there was a sudden crash, accompanied by shrill trumpeting, and a small herd of elephants, headed by a monster bull, came charging down an avenue composed of thorn trees and aloes, directly on our position.

So intent were they on getting away that they had apparently not seen us. Khaliffa, who had my second gun, promptly dived into a bush, but Sabha, notwithstanding that he had never seen a wild elephant before, stood firm and, firing into the leading animals, we fortunately turned them.

There is always danger attending this kind of sport, for in the general stampede that takes place there is a great risk of being trampled underfoot. The horsemen now coming up, the cordon was broken and the big tusker with the remaining elephants made off. I was greatly disappointed in not securing the big fellow, for he had a splendid pair of ivories.

However, we had done very well, five bull elephants, and a cow shot by mistake. It took us two full days to cut out all the tusks, the largest pair weighing over 90 lbs.

The following morning found us in the saddle again on the spoor of another herd, which we followed for some fourteen miles and finally came upon the elephants, standing about and feeding in a broad valley covered with thorn trees and aloes.

This herd was a small one, consisting of one bull and six cows. Throwing up some sand to find the direction of the wind, I took Khaliffa with me, and creeping cautiously up towards the bull, who was standing a little apart from the others, was about to take the temple shot when I was startled by a report of a rifle close to my ear.

Turning sharply round, I found myself close to a cow elephant, who, with trunk curled up, ears thrown forward, and trumpeting furiously, was not five yards away. Instantly it struck me that our only safety lay in showing a bold front, for a shot at such close quarters unless instantly fatal, or any movement on our part would, I knew, only provoke a charge.

So whispering to Khaliffa to stand firm, we stood

perfectly still, facing the brute, who kept up a succession of shrill screams, with which the whole jungle seemed to vibrate, for a minute that appeared the longest I had ever passed. Suddenly she swung round and made off in the direction taken by the other elephants, but not before I had lodged a bullet from the 8-bore in her ribs.

It now appeared that, while I was stalking the bull, this vicious old cow had got our wind, and had quietly come up from behind—apparently to inspect us more closely—when Khaliffa, happening to look round at that moment, fortunately saw her and blazed into her face with my 10-bore. The shot had evidently done her no harm, but so close was she that I have not the slightest doubt that, but for Khaliffa's fortunate intervention one, or perhaps both, of us might have been killed.

We now took up the tracks of the wounded cow by the blood, of which there was plenty, and soon came on her standing within twenty yards of a bush, looking very savage. Stalking up to this bush, which was to leeward of her, I killed her with a shot in the temple. Though a large elephant, her tusks were merely stumps and not worth taking.

Quickly mounting our horses, which we had left some distance off, we now took up the spoor of the rest of the herd, and eventually came upon them late in the evening in an open plain covered with grass and scrub. They were walking slowly on, swinging their trunks from side to side and quite unconscious of our approach.

Galloping ahead, with Khaliffa following, I was soon on a level with the bull, who was amongst the rearmost animals, and about thirty yards to his left. Jumping off, I fired a right and left at his shoulder with the 8-bore Paradox. On receiving the shots he ran on a few yards, then fell over, dead.

It was nearly dark by the time we had removed the tusks which were quite a nice pair. Then collecting some dry wood, we made a fire and lay down beside the dead elephant. During the night I heard a lion roar not far from our bivouac.

In the morning, on our way back to camp, I shot a fine lesser koodoo, and wounded an oryx bull which my men

retrieved next morning, being drawn to the spot by the vultures.

It was late in the afternoon, a few days after this incident, that a Somali from an adjoining Karia rode in to say that he had seen a very large bull elephant about a mile from the camp.

We lost no time in saddling our horses and, guided by our informant, soon came in full view of the elephant, crossing an open, grassy plain at a brisk trot, for he had evidently seen or winded us, and was making for a thick belt of jungle skirting the valley on the further side.

Galloping hard, closely followed by Nur, I was soon alongside of the bull, and firing from the saddle, gave him a good shot between the shoulders, but before I had time to mark the effect of the shot he wheeled suddenly round and giving a shrill scream charged most determinedly, chasing me for about a hundred yards, then, pulling up, made for the same strip of jungle again.

Shouting to Nur to follow me, I galloped hard to intercept him, and after an exciting chase headed him off, bringing him to a standstill facing me, about thirty yards distant, looking the picture of annoyance.

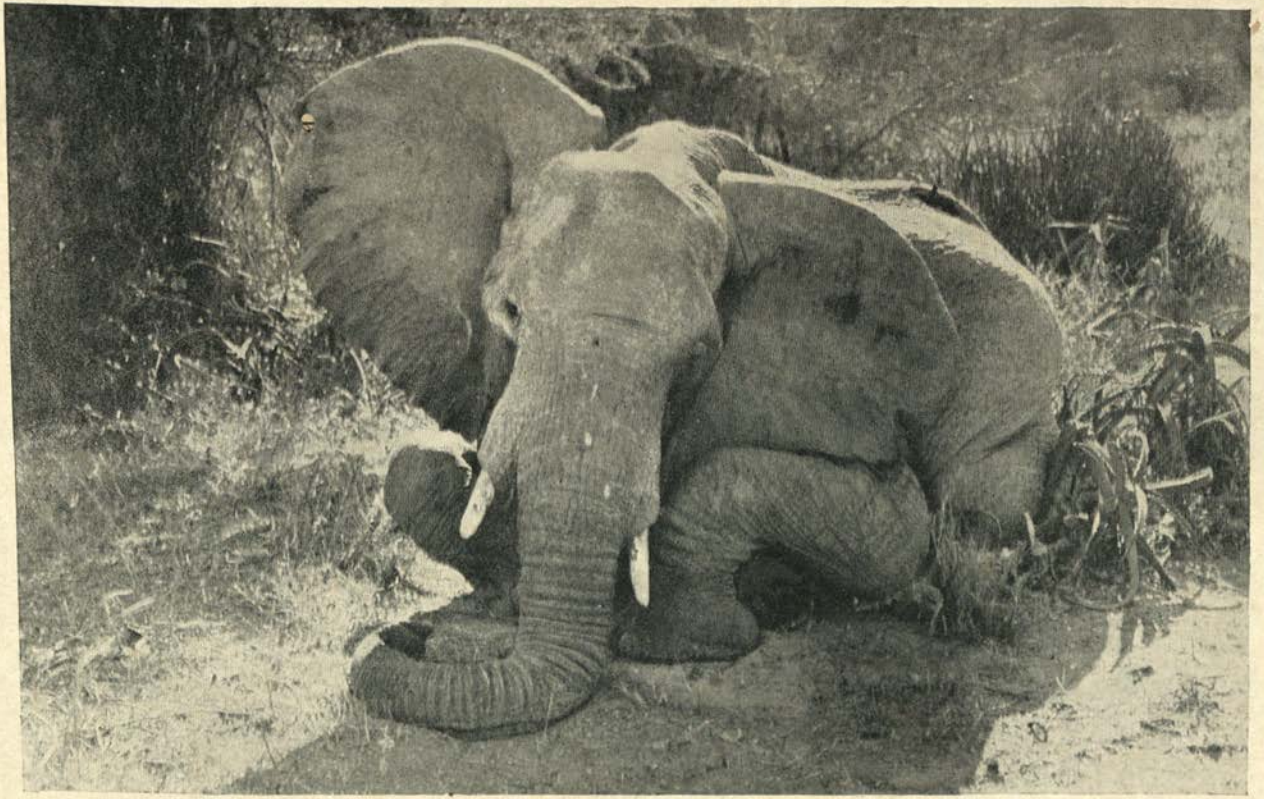
I now heard shouting to my left, and the elephant, seeing Nur galloping up, turned in that direction, exposing his shoulder. I fired a right and left at once, hitting him fairly in the ribs, when on he came again, screaming like a steam engine.

Following every turn of my horse, I thought he would have caught me, when, on reaching the strip of jungle, I turned suddenly to the left and, the wind being favourable, succeeded in giving him the slip.

By this time the sun was nearly down and being utterly fagged out, we made the best of our way to camp, which, however, we did not reach till some hours after dark.

The next morning we took up the tracks of the bull and found him eventually, lying on his side quite dead. He was a splendid old fellow, with a remarkable fine pair of tusks. I photographed him as he lay in the strong defensive position to which he had finally retreated.

We remained several days at this camp, overhauling our stores, preserving our specimens, photographing the dead



THE VICIOUS COW ELEPHANT.
(Africa.)

[*To face p.* 188.

elephant, etc., and then moved on to the Harawa Valley, when I was fortunate enough in securing more elephants and lions.

One day, having bagged six elephants, we had dismounted and were standing round their bodies, admiring our prizes, when suddenly we saw a little calf, about four feet high, coming in our direction followed by a cow elephant. The latter, on seeing us spread her ears at once and trumpeting shrilly charged down on us.

Knowing I had only one cartridge in my gun and there was no time to reload, I reserved my fire. Just then a Somali from an adjoining Karia, who had joined the hunt and was standing a little way off, ran towards us for protection.

The elephant, catching sight of him, gave chase at once and before he had run a dozen yards picked him up and killed him instantly, rolling him between her feet and driving her tusks through his body. On our running up and shouting at her, she left the man and made for us, charging most determinedly, when, with a lucky shot, I dropped her dead, the bullet, striking her between the eyes, having penetrated the brain.

Our first thought now was for the injured man, but on going up to him we found he was quite dead—pummelled absolutely, beyond all recognition.

Meanwhile, the little calf, which had never left his mother's side was trumpeting and squealing and charging anyone who attempted to approach him. We tried to secure him with ropes, but without success, and eventually, though much to my regret, were obliged to abandon the attempt.

Often, in after years, when telling the tale of this adventure, I have been blamed for failing to capture a prize so rare as a young elephant, and no doubt by making a greater effort, I might possibly have succeeded in securing it. But, what with looking after my caravan, protecting myself from unfriendly natives, etc., etc., I was not particularly anxious to increase my troubles and responsibilities by adding an irascible little elephant to my establishment, which was already as large as I could manage.

CHAPTER XXV

Move my camp—*En route* to Abyssinian border—Halt at a Karia—Gungdya bitten by a snake—Rough and ready remedies—The patient recovers—A deadly adder—I am regarded as a curiosity—An involuntary exhibition—Bad water—The water difficulty—March resumed—Shoot a wart-hog—The animal described—A permanent camp—Good sport—Native elephant hunters—Their methods described—Quotation from Sir Samuel Baker—Hamstringing elephants—A renowned Arab hunter—Advancing on his quarry—The bay mare—Face to face—A tense moment—The hunter hunted—Clever manœuvring—The blow delivered—A handful of dust—The second blow—Bleeding to death—A herd of giraffe—The Somali species different from South African—I secure a fine old bull—The hunt described—Another bull shot—The wild ass—Secure two as specimens—A woman and child abandoned by Somalis—I act the good Samaritan—Death of the mother—The infant on my hands—How to rear it ?—The problem solved—Condensed milk and sago—Wonderful results—The pet of the camp—Infant physical culture—The Somali method—My leave draws to a close—Forced marches to the coast—Malodorous trophies—Back to Bombay—I meet Sir Samuel Baker—Interesting conversation—An enthusiastic sportsman.

THE horrible tragedy just related cast such a gloom over my men that I determined to move my camp next morning to a well on the border of Abyssinia. Marching the whole day along the old caravan route we arrived at a Karia—the name of which I forget—and halted for the night.

While the men were cutting down trees, etc., to form the usual zareba, I strolled out with my gun, accompanied by my Bhil orderly, Gungdya, to shoot some guinea-fowl for the pot, a number of these birds being in the vicinity of the camp.

We were strolling along leisurely, when Gungdya suddenly gave a scream, and said he had been bitten by a snake. Looking on the ground I saw the snake—which was about a foot long—gliding away into some bushes,

but we followed and promptly killed it, then, taking Gungdya by the arm, I ran him back to camp.

Here, cutting open the wound, which was on the ankle, I rubbed in a quantity of salt, the only remedy I could think of besides brandy, of which I gave him a good dose, then ran him up and down to keep up the circulation, for he was becoming very drowsy. However, by the next morning he had quite recovered, though there was no doubt that the snake was a poisonous one, for the Somali declared it to be the Abeso, a kind of adder, the bite of which is said to be very deadly.

Most of the natives at this Karia had never seen a European before. They consequently regarded me much in the same way as one might a new animal at the Zoo, and flocked in such numbers to inspect me, that my camp soon resembled that of some travelling circus or menagerie. Unfortunately there was no gate-money for entrance, or the exhibition would have been quite a profitable business!

The water at the camp was very brackish, and black almost as pitch, with a thick blue scum on it, and an odour altogether indescribable. Even when boiled, and mixed with alum, it was quite unfit to drink, while any food cooked in it was practically uneatable.

The water supply is always a difficulty in an African expedition, and when crossing the Maritime plains, we had to be exceedingly careful. My specially constructed casks were always kept under lock and key, and the water doled out in rations by Abdi, the headman.

A bath was quite out of the question all this time, and until we reached water—at the other end of the desert—when I managed to procure one in my little indiarubber tub, but my ablutions even then could hardly be described as a bath. Nevertheless, the operation was a Godsend to my two milch goats, for no sooner had I finished, than they lapped down the soapy water with an avidity that proved how thirsty they must have been. However, at this particular Karia, where we were encamped, the water was so exceptionally bad, that we decided to move further north to the extreme edge of the Harawa Valley, and to form a permanent camp on the Abyssinian border.

On this march I shot a very fine specimen of the wart-hog. They are very formidable looking beasts, armed with enormous white tusks, but as compared with the valiant Indian boar are really cowards at heart. The large, fleshy protuberances beneath the eyes and near the snout give this animal its appropriate name of wart-hog.

It is very difficult to find them in rideable country, hence they are not hunted after the Indian manner with a spear but are generally shot. I speared one once, however, near Berbera, but this beast had been previously wounded by a bullet.

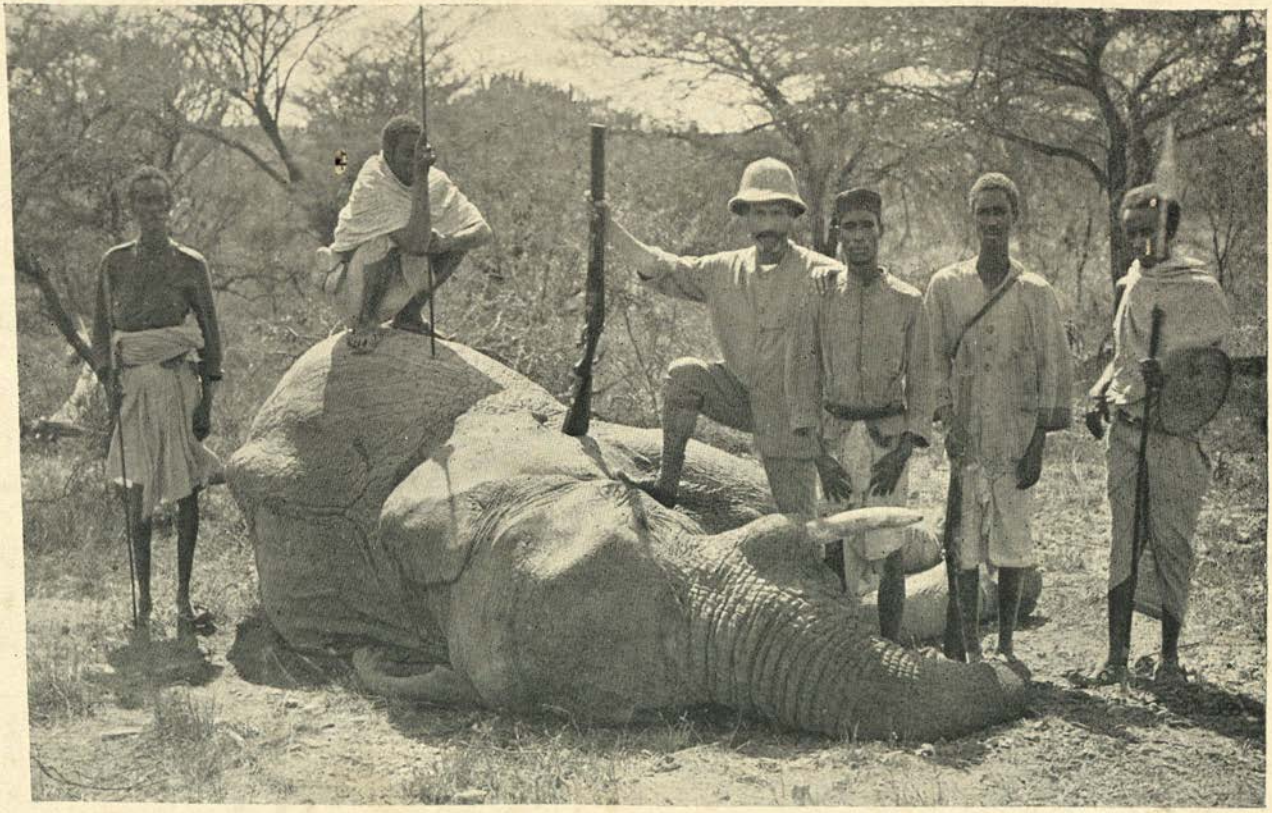
We remained in this beautiful country where we formed our permanent camp for several weeks, during which time I was seldom, from sunrise to sunset, more than an hour at the camp, being always out hunting either in the saddle or on foot.

The country simply abounded with game to an extent I never yet had seen, and I had most glorious sport with elephants, lions and a variety of antelopes. The natives, too, were very friendly, flocking to my camp for meat, of which I had always plenty.

This was my last shooting camp of any importance in Somaliland, but before concluding the narrative of my adventures in that country, I must not omit to mention a strange and cruel method of hunting elephants resorted to by some of the Gadabarsi elephant hunters. While a band of these were with me at one of my camps, they described their method to me. It appears that like the Hamran Arabs, they ride after an elephant and hamstring him with a sword, one man riding in front, usually on a white horse to attract the elephant's attention. The swords used are single-handed ones, with blades as sharp as razors, strapped to a bone handle with raw hide.

In describing their manner of attacking an elephant I cannot do better than quote the following passage from Sir Samuel Baker's most interesting work, "Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia":—

> "The elephant stood facing us like a statue; it did not move a single muscle beyond a quick and restless action of the eyes, that were watching all



(1) Digby Davies. (2) Nur. [*To face p.* 192.

VICTORS AND VANQUISHED. (3) Khaliffa and Somali Trackers.

sides. Tahir Sherriff and his youngest brother Ibrahim now separated, and each took opposite sides of the elephant, and then joined each other about twenty paces behind it, I accompanied them until Tahir advised me to keep about the same distance upon the left flank. In front of the elephant were two Aggageers—one of whom was the renowned Rodder Sherriff—with the withered arm. All being ready for action, Rodder now rode slowly towards the head of the cunning old bull, who was quietly awaiting an opportunity to make certain of some one who might give him a good chance. Rodder rode a bay mare. . . . Slowly and coolly she advanced towards her wary antagonist, until within about eight or nine yards of the elephant's head, the creature never moved, and the *mise en scène* was beautiful; not a word was spoken, and we kept our places amidst utter silence, which was at length broken by a snort from the mare who gazed intently at the elephant, as though watching for the moment of attack; one more pace forward and Rodder sat coolly upon his mare, with his eyes fixed upon those of the elephant. For an instant I saw the white of his eye nearest to me. 'Look out, Rodder, he's coming!' I exclaimed. With a shrill scream the elephant dashed upon him like an avalanche! Round went the mare as though upon a pivot, and away over rocks and stones, flying like a gazelle, with the monkey-like form of little Rodder Sherriff leaning forward and looking over his left shoulder as the elephant rushed after him. For a moment I thought he would be caught. Had his mare stumbled all was lost, but she gained in the race—after a few quick bounding strides, and Rodder still looking behind him, kept his distance so close to the elephant that its outstretched trunk was within a few paces of the mare's tail.

"Tahir Sherriff and his brother Ibrahim swept down like falcons in his rear. In full speed they dexterously avoided the trees until they arrived upon open ground, when they dashed up close to the hind-quarters of the furious elephant, who maddened with

the excitement, heeded nothing but Rodder and his mare, that was almost in his grasp. When close to the tail of the elephant, Tahir Sherriff's sword flashed from its sheath, as grasping his trusty blade he leapt nimbly to the ground, while Ibrahim caught the reins of his horse; two or three bounds on foot, with his sword clutched in both hands, and he was close behind the elephant; a bright gleam shone like lightning as the sun struck upon his descending steel; this was followed by a dull crack, as the sword cut through skin and sinews and settled deep in the bone, about twelve inches above the foot. At the next stride the elephant halted dead short in the midst of its tremendous charge. Tahir had jumped quickly on one side and had vaulted into his saddle with his naked sword in hand. At the same moment Rodder, who had led the chase, turned sharp round, and again faced the elephant as before. Stooping quickly from his saddle he picked up from the ground a handful of dust which he threw into the face of the vicious-looking animal that once more attempted to rush upon him. It was impossible—his foot was dislocated and turned up in front like an old shoe. In an instant Tahir was once more on foot, and again his sharp sword slashed the remaining leg. The great brute could not move! The first cut with the sword had utterly disabled it; the second was its death-blow, the arteries of the leg were divided, and the blood spurted in jets from his wounds. The elephant now quickly bled to death."

I have quoted the passage in its entirety because it would have been difficult to abstract it; nor could I venture to take such a liberty with the writings of a sportsman so renowned. From the graphic description of the attack it would appear that the methods employed by the Hamran Arab were much the same as those described by the Gadabarsi hunters, except that the latter use their swords single-handed, and do not dismount, but deal their blow from horseback and when going at full gallop.

* * * * * *

While encamped on the border of Abyssinia—in the

permanent camp I have mentioned—I was very lucky in coming across a herd of giraffes, for, as a rule, these animals are only to be met with much further north on the Webbe.

The Somali giraffe, however, differs from the South African species, the markings being much lighter and the patches of colour divided into more hexagonal and sexagonal shapes. They are very difficult to approach, their thin, long necks and extraordinary power of vision enabling them to detect their enemies a long way off.

Of the two I killed, one was a remarkably fine old bull, which we secured after a most exciting stalk. The herd to which he belonged was standing upon an elevated position from whence they could keep a good look out. The wind being favourable, however, I crept up, inch by inch, marking a thick bush as my point of cover.

I had my ·500 Express loaded with five and a half drams of powder and solid bullets, and when within about eighty yards, I took a steady aim at the bull; the satisfactory sound of the ball striking upon his mottled hide was followed by his blundering forward and falling heavily on his side, stone dead.

Quickly reloading, I followed the herd—now shambling along at a tremendous pace—and by a lucky shot managed to break the leg of another bull which was soon caught up and despatched by my eager Somalis, ever on the look out for meat.

These were my first giraffes; unfortunately, I had not my camera with me that day, or would have photographed them, for they are splendid-looking animals, though, despite their great size, probably the most helpless of all the brute creation. They stand from fifteen to eighteen feet in height, but for protective purposes this gives them no advantage, and it is entirely to the swiftness of their pace and extraordinary length of vision that they trust to for protection from their enemies.

The only other animal of any size that I met with in Somaliland was the wild ass, which is common in sterile parts of the Guban. It is a fine-looking beast with striped legs like a zebra, but can hardly be considered as game from the sportsman's point of view. I shot a couple in the course of the expedition to preserve as specimens.

Talking of specimens reminds me of another live product of the country which I acquired in a somewhat curious fashion on my way to the interior. I had passed various caravans of armed Somalis, journeying to the coast with strings of camels laden with skins, etc., when, one day, I came across a wretched woman, who had lately given birth to a child, and being too feeble to keep up with the caravan, had been left, together with the infant, on the road. I picked them up and, much to the disgust of my men, had them carefully placed on a camel and taken to my zareba, where the woman, who was in the last stage of exhaustion, subsequently died. The difficulty now arose as to how to rear the child, but we finally overcame this by feeding him on condensed milk and sago—a diet which evidently suited him, for he throve wonderfully well on it, soon becoming strong and fat.

He came in time to be a great pet with the men, who, whether as an experiment or in accordance with recognized Somali methods for the physical improvement of their young, used to oil and grease him all over, then put him out in the sun to dry!

He had been with us for several months, when one day, happening to fall in with another caravan of his tribesmen, I handed him over to them. This incident not only confirms what I have said as to the callousness of the Somalis with reference to their woman-kind, but would serve to prove the fallacy of ultra-civilization; for I am convinced no newly-born European infant in like circumstances would have survived the ordeal. But to go on with my story, my time was now drawing to a close, and I had to make all haste I could to reach the coast. However, by a succession of forced marches I accomplished the journey in an extraordinarily short time. On arrival at Aden, I found the garrison all down with danki—a kind of rheumatic fever which had broken out in epidemic form. I fared no better than the rest, but, fortunately, before my steamer sailed, I had sufficiently recovered to be able to go on board.

All my skins, which had been carefully packed up in bales, were relegated to the hold, but some of my best heads I insisted on keeping in my cabin much to the

exasperation of the captain, for they were fairly odoriferous, as I was later to discover.

Luckily the voyage, so far as I was concerned, was a short one, otherwise my fellow passengers in adjacent cabins might have been driven to protest. During the first days of the voyage I was much troubled with fever, but had managed to shake off the worst of it by the time we reached Bombay.

I had a great welcome given me on my return to Khandesh, my friends being all much interested in the result of my expedition, and in the photos and trophies I had secured. But my reception was as nothing compared to that afforded by their friends to Sabha and Gungdya, who were quite heroes for a time!

I stayed a week-end at Government House before leaving Bombay, and gave an account of my experiences to Lord H——, who, it will be remembered, had helped and encouraged me in carrying out the expedition.

It was during this visit I first met Sir Samuel Baker, the great hunter and explorer, also Lady Baker, and was much interested in his conversation, though I found him somewhat reticent as regards his own exploits. He told me he had made five trips to India without having succeeded in bagging a bison—an animal he was particularly keen to secure.

I do not know whether he ever accomplished this desire, but considering his years, and that he had shot almost every kind of dangerous animal in the world, I could not but admire the enthusiasm and determination he showed to obtain this one particular specimen!

CHAPTER XXVI

At Dharwar again—Hear of wild elephants in Kanara jungle—Damage done to crops—Native District Officer puzzled—His petition to Government—Forest officer and myself consulted—Suggestion and inaction—I act on my own—Special shooting camp—An unlucky guest—Some erratic shooting—"Nearly a record bag"—Commendable perseverance—The elephants at last—A moonlight hunt—Watching the herd—Close quarters—I fire at a bull—A forehead shot—Effect instantaneous—Another bull floored—Let off a small one—The herd makes off—Congratulations—Dangerous "vermin"—Natives' misuse of English words and phrases—Slave to rules and regulations—The lonely railway station—Young Bengal—A sudden invasion—Flight of the staff—Besieged in his office—Only one thing to be done—A wire to headquarters—"Tiger in charge"—Realizing the situation—A night of mental torture—Morning brings relief—Wild dogs—The damage they do—A nuisance to sportsmen—Hunting in packs—Tigers occasionally attacked—Description of the animal—Difference between the wild and the domestic dog—Crocodile, method of attacking their victims—The final rush.

SOME years after my return from Somaliland—as far as I can remember some time in the year 1906—while stationed at Dharwar, I heard of a herd of elephants having crossed over from Mysore, where they are strictly preserved, into the Kanara jungles which borders on Dharwar.

The advent of these elephants caused such consternation in Kanara, as they were roaming about the country and doing considerable damage to the crops. The collector at the time happening to be a native, and, unfortunately, a Perbu, a caste not remarkable for courage, was much exercised in his mind at the ravages committed by these animals.

At his wits' end to know what he was to do, he finally solved the difficulty, as he thought, by submitting an urgent appeal to Government in the following language: "That drastic measures should be taken to rid the country of these *vermin*, as the lives of Her Majesty's subjects,

especially those of himself, wife and children, were in imminent peril." The Government of Bombay, despite the quaint wording of this application, recognized the seriousness of the situation and took up the matter, and, shortly afterwards, consulted the Forest Officer and myself as to the best means to be adopted for circumventing these brutes, as they were really causing havoc to the crops of the villages within a considerable area.

I remember suggesting that one of the two following plans should be adopted: the first that some men might be sent from the Mysore Kheddah, which had been established on the lines of Sanderson's Kheddah, to capture the elephants by the creation of a temporary blockade, etc., or, failing this, that I might be authorized to shoot them, and be given the necessary leave and permission to enter the Kanara district and organize my campaign.

Dharwar, as I have said, being on the borders of the Kanara district, there was a likelihood of these animals crossing over to my side. Accordingly, pending a reply to my suggestion, I arranged, whenever possible, to have my camp as near this border as I could.

However, as neither the Forest Officer nor myself received any reply from the Government to the suggestions we had made, we naturally concluded that they had given up all idea of disturbing the elephants, trusting probably they would return to Mysore on their own account. It transpired afterwards, however, and much to my amusement, that the elephants were being preserved for some high personages, who were contemplating a shooting trip to Kanara themselves!

Finally, about Christmas time, hearing rumours of the elephants having been seen close to the southern borders of Dharwar, I arranged to have my usual Christmas camp in that locality, where I was eventually joined by one or two others, for, as I said before, a camp at this festive season is generally a larger one than usual.

Amongst those who were there on this occasion was a young civilian, who had recently purchased a very valuable horse which had cost him several hundred rupees. On the day before he rode out to the camp, he had sent his animal on to change to halfway. The next morning on arriving

at this stage he found the horse standing unprotected, exposed to a cold easterly wind, while the syce was sleeping soundly, wrapped up in the blankets belonging to the animal. The result of this was that next morning—in spite of every effort made to ward off the effects of the chill—the horse showed unmistakable symptoms of kumri—paralysis of the loins; and although a vet was sent for, and did what he could for the animal, it died the next evening. To begin our camp with a disaster was clearly a bad omen; and such unfortunately it proved, for we saw nothing of the elephants, while of other animals, all we bagged were two panthers and, incidentally, an ordinary village cow! The last falling to the rifle of an absent-minded sportsman, and a somewhat dangerous neighbour when out shooting; for, notwithstanding his exploit, for which he had to pay a large sum as compensation, his next performance was to pepper me with a charge of No. 6, which, but for my leather gaiters, might have damaged me considerably.

The incident reminded me of rather an amusing story told of an Indian civilian, who, though not a sportsman himself, happened to be appointed as District Officer to one of the most sporting districts in Bengal, where he gradually acquired a taste for sport and sedulously set to work to make himself efficient in the use of guns and rifles, and in the art of shooting generally.

Unfortunately, while still in the rudimentary stage of his education, he was induced one day to take part in a big drive with elephants through some jungle near the station, a kind of annual wind-up of the shooting season, when anything put up may be fired at from a tiger to a partridge. Next morning the police officer, whose duties had prevented him from joining the shooting party, having occasion to consult the District Officer on some business, found him seated at the table in his office, with his head resting between his hands, apparently in a most dejected form of mind. He looked up as his visitor approached, and to his question as to whether he had made a big bag at the shoot, replied in a doleful tone of voice, that he was much afraid he had made a *very* big one, for he had shot one of the beating elephants as well as its mahout! He then went on to explain how the accident had occurred.

It appeared that at the end of the last beat a partridge rising in front of him, had flown down the line, he had fired at it, but too late, and missing the bird, hit an elephant and mahout who were in the line of fire.

Fortunately, being at the end of the line they were some distance off, hence neither were seriously injured; nevertheless, the author of this exploit had a bad time of it for some months. However, by sticking doggedly to the business, he triumphed in the end, eventually becoming one of the best sportsmen in the district.

* * * * * *

Some months after the Christmas meeting, when the rainy season had set in, I had occasion to visit this part of the district again to investigate a dacoity case, and was encamped about sixteen miles from a place called Karjot, on the Kanara borders, where I had established a system of mounted patrols for the suppression of dacoities.

One afternoon about three o'clock, a sowar * belonging to these patrols rode into camp, evidently much excited, and reported that the elephants we had been in quest of were at the moment close to Karjot, where they had already done, and were doing, a considerable amount of damage to the villages. I started at once, but as my men were all on foot, we did not reach the village until late in the evening, when I found a deputation of some two hundred villagers awaiting my arrival, all in a great state of excitement, as they declared that the elephants were quite near, and only waiting for nightfall to revisit their crops.

They showed me their wheat and paddy fields, acres of which, I saw, had been trodden down and destroyed by these destructive brutes. As there was a good moon and the night therefore almost as light as day, we took up their tracks at once, and soon came on the elephants in a network of ravines some three-quarters of a mile from the village.

The herd consisted of three bulls and some fourteen cows, and very imposing they looked in the moonlight; though not to be compared, in my opinion, to their African brethren, either in stature or general appearance. The wind being favourable, I carried out my old plan of creeping close up to them, and it was greatly to the credit of my two

* Trooper.

police orderlies to have stuck to me as closely as they did, for neither of them had seen a wild elephant before.

We now stood beside a small tree watching the herd, when suddenly one of the bulls turned his head in our direction, being hardly two spears' length from us. I fired at once, and the bullet striking him in the centre of the forehead, he fell dead with hardly a struggle.

Losing no time I now ran in and floored another elephant —also a bull—with a shot in the shoulder, using the second barrel of my 8-bore Paradox; and as the remaining bull was quite a young animal, not worth shooting, I did not attempt to follow up the herd, which rapidly moved off.

Though greatly disappointed with the size of these elephants, as compared with the African variety, I was glad of the opportunity of testing the effects of the forehead and shoulder shots, and also to have freed the village of these dangerous pests. On my return to headquarters, I received many congratulations on my success; though I fear the odium of having spoilt the sport of the high personages for whom these animals were being preserved, clung to me for many a month afterwards.

The native collector doubtless rejoiced greatly at the destruction of these two "dangerous" *vermin!* and probably congratulated himself at the success which had attended his wonderfully worded representation to the Government on the subject!

Apropos of this I much regret that space does not admit of my quoting more instances of the quaint phraseology made use of by native officers in their official communications, but I am tempted to repeat one story in particular, which, though probably well known to Anglo-Indians, may possibly be fresh to ordinary English readers.

The incident took place at a lonely railway flag-station surrounded by dense jungle, and some two hundred miles or more from the headquarters of the Traffic Department of that particular line. The station was in charge of a young Bengali sub-stationmaster, who, like many of his kind, was virtually an automaton, and having no initiative, being quite incapable of any action not provided for in the rules and regulations of the company.

One evening, about an hour after the last train had

passed his station, he was seated writing in his office, when he heard a great commotion on the platform, and looking through the door, saw his pointsman, and one or two other members of his staff, apparently flying for their lives in the direction of the village near the station; while, further down the platform, was a huge tiger galloping towards his office. The situation was decidedly an unpleasant one for the unfortunate official, alone as he was in his office, and with no protective weapon more lethal than the office ruler. Fortunately there was but one door to the office, the key of which was providentially on the inner side.

He had the presence of mind to draw the door quickly to and lock it, and could then have mounted to the room above, where with perfect safety he might have shouted at the tiger, and thus possibly driven it away; but this did not occur to him, nor were there in the regulations, which he knew by heart, any instructions on the subject of encounters between stationmasters and tigers.

In these circumstances it seemed to his official mind that there was but one thing to be done, and that was to report the matter to headquarters and ask for assistance. How this was to be furnished in time to be of any use he did not trouble to conjecture, it was the proper procedure and, therefore, must be observed.

Having arrived at this decision, he lost no time in carrying it out, with the result that about half an hour later, the traffic manager at headquarters, two hundred miles distant from the station, received the following quaintly worded message: "Tiger in charge of platform. Please arrange."

The wording of the wire, though ridiculous as to the request it contained, was otherwise quite to the point; for the tiger, at the moment, was certainly master of the situation, and maintained its position for some time, prowling round the station buildings till far into the night, and occasionally sniffing at the door of the office as if meditating an attempt to force its way in.

Meanwhile the terror-stricken occupant, who, in spite of his blind confidence in routine, had realized that it was quite impossible for headquarters "to arrange," as he had so confidingly requested, in time to save him, should the

tiger succeed in breaking in during the night, which seemed more than likely.

However, as it happened, he suffered nothing worse than a night of mental anguish, for it was not until the sun was well above the horizon, that he ventured to emerge from his shelter, when he dispatched another message reporting that "he had resumed charge of the station!"

* * * * * *

With the shooting of the two elephants, as described in the earlier portion of this chapter, my list of wild animals shot in India was practically complete; though there were two other beasts, or to be accurate, a beast and a reptile, which I find I have omitted to mention, viz., the wild dog and the crocodile, both of which I have often encountered in my wanderings after other game.

The first, apart from the damage they do in the jungles, are a perfect nuisance to the sportsman, for they wander from one locality to another, and should they happen to be in the vicinity of his camp will scare the game for many miles. It is seldom that a tiger or panther is to be found in any jungle they frequent. They hunt singly, or more often in packs of about twenty, and have been even known to attack tigers, causing them to seek safety by climbing trees, a most unusual proceeding for a tiger, and one that proves how greatly they must fear these formidable foes.

The wild dog is vulpine in appearance, and of a reddish-brown colour with full bushy tail, tipped with black. It has one peculiarity not generally known, I believe, but nevertheless a fact, viz., that, unlike the domesticated species, it either cannot, or at any rate does not, bark.

The crocodile, or rather alligator, though hardly coming under the category of game, is a formidable brute, and in certain localities quite as destructive to human life as a man-eating leopard or tiger. In attacking its victim, its tactics much resemble those of a German submarine. Reconnoitring long and warily from a distance, it approaches with great caution, and, if suspicious, sinks at once below the surface; often repeating the manœuvre several times during its approach. If, on the other hand, the coast is clear, it will descend after the first look round, and, swimming under water, the next thing to be seen of

it will be its rugged head and fishy eyes, slowly revolving in a last survey of its victim; then comes the final attack, delivered rapidly as lightning, as with a rush and mighty swish of the tail, it pounces on the unsuspecting prey and drags it under water. The best place to shoot these vicious reptiles is in the centre of the neck at its junction with the head, where, if a bull's eye is made, death will be practically instantaneous.

CHAPTER XXVII

Wild-fowl and small game plentiful—Coolin and Sarus—Venerated by natives—Many alligators—I shoot one—Internal evidence of human victims—Muggurs—The snub-nosed variety—Good fishing—Wild figs and frogs as bait—Shooting fish—Thieves in camp—Some description of their methods—A victim's experience—Choice between being robbed or murdered—A clever thief—Carelessness of native syces—An example—Pony trap adventure—Both reins unbuckled—Pony bolts with cart—Two helpless women—A railway level crossing—Charging the gates—A smash—Advantages of being a heavy weight—Lying insensible on the line—A train approaching—Agonizing suspense—A miraculous escape—The distracted husband—Well-merited castigation—Driving accidents not uncommon in India—Partially-trained horses—Amateur horse-breaking—Implements used—Home-made but useful—The break—Ramshackle contrivance—A haphazard system—Dangerous vices engendered—Bolting and shying—I fall a victim to the latter—More native carelessness—A coronation celebration—Arranging for a royal salute—An ancient weapon found—Volunteer gunners—Loading the weapon—The supreme moment arrives—The salute fired—Direful results—A tragic ending.

WHILE encamped on one occasion on the banks of the Tapti—the river mentioned in another chapter—I was much struck by the number of wild-fowl and small game of all kinds which seemed so plentiful. Every field was swarming with quail and in every patch of rushes we found snipe, while in the pools were duck of many kinds.

There were also a number of coolin, or large blue crane, which come in huge flocks in the cold weather. I had shot these beautiful birds in both Nasik and Dharwar but had never met with them in such large numbers as they were here.

I also fell in with the Sarus here, for the first time; it is a huge bird belonging to the crane family of a light-blue colour with some white about the tail. The head and some eight inches of the neck are bright red, but devoid of

feathers, which detracts much from an otherwise very handsome bird.

The natives regard these birds with some degree of veneration as they do also the peacock, hence, like the latter, they are seldom shot by Europeans, or at any rate by such who know the custom of the country, for it is bad policy to ignore the feelings of the people in such matters, especially from a sporting point of view.

On the opposite side of the Tapti river, all along the edge of the bank, there were many huge alligators lying basking in the sun. One day, while walking along the bank near our tent, I saw one of these monsters, which had crawled out of the water, and lay in such a position that I was able to approach him.

On reaching a sheltering bush, about fifteen yards from this brute, I fired two barrels into him before he could reach the water, which he managed to get to, however, and throwing himself into it, lashed about furiously with his tail for some time, but finally sank.

Next morning we found him close to the bank, but quite dead, and the villagers, fastening a rope to the carcase, pulled him out. He was a huge brute, over ten feet in length, with a most formidable pair of jaws. On cutting him open, we found a large quantity of pebbles, also remains of glass bracelet and cloth, proving that he had devoured some wretched woman, whom he had evidently caught when she had been fetching water from the river.

Alligators—or muggurs, as the natives call the snub-nosed variety of the crocodile—are very bold in their attack. I have known of a pet dog been carried off while drinking at the river, within a few yards of where its master was standing. Goats, deer, and bullocks too occasionally, are also seized most cunningly by these brutes.

In shooting them I have found that unless shot dead by a bullet in the head or neck, as already stated, they will invariably struggle into the water eventually returning to the bank, if not disturbed, to die.

When shooting wild-fowl, if a dog is used to retrieve birds, it is certain, sooner or later, to be seized by one of these saurians, and if a duck—wounded or dead—falls into the water anywhere in the vicinity of one of these reptiles,

it is almost certain to be taken. Many a shot bird thus disappears as if by magic, before the gunner's eyes. There is also some good fishing to be had at this camp, and I caught quite a number of bright, silvery little fish, somewhat resembling trout which took the fly and minnow very readily. We also got some murrel in a large tank close by—the hook baited with, of all extraordinary things, wild figs or frogs.

A number of these murrel were also shot by some of the men in camp, who fired at them from trees, as they lay basking near the surface of the water. These fish are excellent eating, the flesh being white and firm, with very few bones.

We were greatly annoyed at this camp by thieves at night; their dexterity was quite wonderful, and their boldness no less surprising, for they did not even hesitate to steal from my tent. With their bodies almost naked and well greased, they wriggled along the ground, between the sentries, and made off with everything they could lay their hands on.

A connexion of mine, who once encamped near the hills, in a district where thieves as expert abounded, woke up one night to find a man attempting to remove the bangle from her arm. Having been previously warned of the dangerous character of these men, and their unscrupulous disregard of life, she had the presence of mind to feign sleep, while the man by first massaging her hands and using his oily fingers, eventually succeeded in slipping the bangle over them. It was, doubtless, most annoying to feel her bangle being abstracted, yet had she resisted, or even called for help, she would, in all probability, have been murdered.

This same relative was the heroine in another, and equally perilous adventure, when once staying with some friends. Her hostess had driven her one evening to the club, and while the former was talking to her husband from the trap, the syce, unperceived by any of them, took the opportunity of readjusting the pony's bit! The driver, having finished her conversation, but with her head still turned to her husband, flicked the pony with the whip, preparatory to starting, on which the animal, rather an

impetuous beast, dashed forward, knocking down the syce.

Pulling at the reins, the lady now discovered to her horror that both ends had been detached from the bit, and as she pulled at them, came into her hands. Meanwhile the pony, finding its head free, broke from a canter into a gallop, and finally bolted, with the two helpless women in the trap. Desperate as was their position, the knowledge that no one could help them made it worse. The pony, maddened by the rumbling of the trap behind him, galloped on at racing speed, till coming to the railway at a level crossing, about half a mile down the road, he attempted to jump the gates.

My relative, being very light, was pitched over the gate, and lay stunned close to the line, with a handkerchief she was holding still in her outstretched hand, which seemed to be actually on the line. Her friend, who was of a less sylph-like build—in fact, of such solid proportions that not even the jar of the collision with the gate had succeeded in dislodging her—found herself still seated in the trap.

But before she had time to wonder how this feat had been accomplished, her attention was attracted to a sound in the distance, which, growing louder every moment, soon revealed itself as the rumble of a train, which a moment later was seen rapidly approaching the spot where her friend lay senseless!

A second or two of agonizing suspense, and the engine with its long line of massive waggons had swept past the prostrate figure, and right over the fluttering handkerchief it held. Providentially, the hand itself was not—as it had appeared to be—actually on the line; yet so perilously near to it that as the train approached it had seemed to the anxious watcher as though nothing short of a miracle could avert the terrible calamity impending.

But the passing train was hardly out of sight when, to her inexpressible relief, her friend, recovering from her swoon, stood up, apparently unhurt and unconscious of the danger she had been in, and it was not till some moments later, when she was looking for her lost handkerchief, that she learnt all that had happened after the pony's attempt to jump the gates.

In the end, the only individual who suffered from the misadventure—and deservedly so—was the author of it, to wit, the syce; for his master, seeing his wife and her friend being whirled away to what seemed certain destruction, and helpless to assist them, vented his feelings on him, and in a manner best calculated to impress upon him—mentally and physically—the folly of meddling with the harness when there are people in the trap.

Driving accidents are probably more frequent in India than at home—partly because of the proverbial carelessness of syces as in the case above; but mainly due to the fact that horses and ponies are often used in harness before they have been thoroughly broken in, and especially is this so in the case of animals owned by officials and others quartered or residing in the country, or Mofussil. Take, for instance, horses or ponies belonging to a young civilian, subaltern, or policeman. These have probably been purchased at some livery stable in Bombay, Madras, or Calcutta, as the case may be, and warranted broken to saddle, which may often mean that they have had a saddle on, and perhaps been ridden once or twice by a native riding boy belonging to the stable, but, unless particularly requested, certainly not broken into harness. A month or two after the purchase, and when the owner has himself completed the animal's education as a riding horse, at the expense, possibly, of a fall or two, he will probably decide to put it into harness, and under the guidance of, or aided by his own, or some one else's syce, supposed to be an expert in the business, they proceed to carry out the process to the best of their combined abilities.

The implements used, though somewhat primitive, are effective enough, up to a certain point. They consist firstly of a huge slab of wood, about five feet long by two broad, and some eight inches thick, to the front end of which is fixed an upright pole, and on each side an iron ring—a pair of long traces improvised out of rope, and reins of the same useful material, complete the paraphernalia.

The horse, or pony, which for two or three days previously has been led about morning and evening with the harness on to get accustomed to its weight and feel, is now

harnessed to the log, with a man on each side of its head, and led along some smooth—or preferably grassy—road, on which the log will travel with the least friction and noise.

This process is repeated for two or three days, or more, according to the temperament of the animal, and continued on an ordinary road, till the beast is believed to have become accustomed to the noise and friction of the drag, when the instructor gradually puts his weight on the log, and finally getting on to it, holds on by the pole, and with the reins in his other hand, drives the horse as if it is harnessed to a trap.

After a day or two of this, its preliminary education being supposed to be completed, the animal is harnessed to a trap, the vehicle usually selected for this purpose being an old, ramshackle conveyance, tied up with rope; apparently belonging to no one in particular but generally forthcoming when required.

For the first day or two the horse devotes most of its energies to the demolition of this archaic structure, and often succeeds, but this matters little, for the fragments are soon reunited with rope, and the breaking in process continues, until the animal, though often merely tamed for the time, is supposed to be broken in completely.

It is not surprising, therefore, that under such a haphazard system of training, animals so sensitive as horses should develop such vices as bolting and shying, to which most driving accidents are due. Of these two equally dangerous vices, the last is most common with Indian horses, trained in the perfunctory manner described, and of which I was once the unfortunate exponent.

On this occasion I performed an acrobatic feat which few amateurs have equalled, and none, I am sure, have ever surpassed. I was driving with my wife rather fast down a hill, and we were passing the station cemetery, when some irresponsible idiot of a coolie working there threw a huge cactus root he had just dug up close to my pony.

The animal, naturally enough, stopped dead. The next moment I was flying through space, and turning one complete somersault at least *en route*, landed on the

hard ground. The pony fortunately stood still, and, except for a few bruises and torn clothing, I was none the worse for my flight.

Curiously enough in this instance the person weighing lightest came off best; for my wife, who is very light, remained in the trap, in fact, so little did she feel the jar, that she was quite at a loss to understand my sudden exit.

The carelessness of syces is, as I have said, proverbial; but though perhaps more pronounced in this particular class, is a failing common to most natives, and is often the cause of serious troubles, as in the case I quote below.

A friend of mine, named G——, who was at the time an Assistant Deputy Collector, happening to be out on tour in his district on the day of the King's Coronation, thought it only right to celebrate the occasion by having what is termed in India a Tamasha, *i.e.*, a function. He therefore decided to get up some sports, etc., in the village where he was encamped, and as a grand finale—to give a Royal Salute with an ancient muzzle-loading cannon which, unfortunately—as it turned out—happened to be in the village, and had hitherto been regarded merely as a curiosity.

There was some difficulty in procuring a sufficient quantity of gunpowder, also as to who should charge the piece, and fire it off, etc., but all was finally overcome by the chief borar,* who volunteered to see to all arrangements assisted by his son, and all for the modest sum of eight annas—or, in English money, about tenpence!

G—— accordingly issued invitations to all the local magnates, and about sunset, after the sports were over, an expectant crowd gathered round, awaiting the firing of the salute.

All being reported ready, G——, assuming a martial air, took off his hat and stood at attention, the crowd following his example, except in the matter of removing their head cover, which as most of the men wore pugris was not possible.

The elder borar being still busily employed in ramming in the powder at the muzzle, had not noticed that his son, to whom he had entrusted the important duty of firing off

* Merchant.

the gun, was perilously near the touch hole, with the fuse in his hand. Presently the latter, quite oblivious of the fact that his parent was at that moment covering the muzzle of the weapon, applied the fuse, and as the old man had by this time unhappily succeeded in ramming the powder home, the charge exploded, ejecting the rammer, which, with the old borar, were carried to some distance, whence the latter, dancing and shrieking in agony and terror, was carried off at once to the infirmary, where he died from his injuries.

It was a sad ending to a function, which up to this unlucky moment had gone off with great éclat, and for the inauguration of which my friend would probably have gained credit, but instead, on reporting the disaster, which he was bound to do, he was, if not actually reprimanded, given to understand that his conduct had been foolish.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A veteran police inspector—Some of his exploits—Tulia Naik—A famous dacoit leader—Small beginnings—First arrest—Escapes from his escort—Forms a gang—A terror to the neighbourhood—Baffles the police—Inspector on his track—The tables turned—Captures the inspector—A drinking bout—The inspector's opportunity—A clever re-arrest—Convicted—An apparent reformation—Return to crime—Final surrender—Transported for life—Sir F—— S——r—A notable police officer—Rising of the Bhils—Babajee their leader—His arrest attempted—Refusal to surrender—Captain H—— of the police shot dead—Escape of the gang—Subsequent pursuit—Sir F—— S——r in command—The gang marked down—Disguised as a native—Babajee found bathing—Captured in the water by Sir F—— S——r—A remarkable achievement—Many of the gang secured—Importance of the capture—Compliment paid by the police—Relation between the military and police—Commissioner of Police, Bombay—A lakh of rupees offered as a bribe—The offer indignantly refused—Strange action of the Government—Sir F—— S——r and an American globe-trotter—His anxiety to see the man who had refused so large a bribe—Enquires if true!—His astonishment when convinced—"Guess you Britishers will keep India!"

I HAVE in a previous chapter given an account of my experiences with a famous leader of dacoits whose exploits and arrest had given me so much trouble, that I had imagined at the time, that as a criminal career, his must have surpassed any ever heard of before.

But I found I was mistaken, for while stationed at Poonah, I came across an old inspector of mine, Hafizullah, a splendid specimen of his class, being over six feet three inches and broad in proportion. During his long service in the force, he had had many strange experiences with criminals of every kind; amongst them one, Tulia Naik, a notorious dacoit, whose arrest he had finally accomplished and in a most sensational manner.

It seems that this individual had started his criminal career in quite a mild sort of way, but wine and women

being his peculiar weakness, he found that in order to satisfy these fancies, he must extend his sphere of action and thieve on a larger scale. He accordingly took more seriously to the business, and gradually improving in efficiency, arrived in due time at the head of his profession. At the time of his arrest he had acquired the reputation of being one of the most dangerous criminals in the Province.

In justice to him, however, it must be admitted that, apart from his own predilection, he had to some extent been forced to adopt a criminal career at an early period of his life and while as yet innocent of crime.

It seems that at this early stage of his existence he had the luck to kill a large panther, and taking the skin to the local Government Treasury, had been awarded the usual award of Rs.12. No sooner had the money been paid, however, than he was beset by the Treasury guard and others, all demanding a share.

He complied with their demands—up to a certain point—but naturally wishing to keep something for himself, refused others who came later. Amongst them was a police constable, who, conscious of his powers to do so, swore to be revenged. Meanwhile Tulia went on, and gathering his friends together, gave them a feast with plenty of liquor, music, singing and dancing, in fact making a regular night of it. Then about midnight a message came from the police ordering the music to be stopped and the party to break up.

Tulia, who had been drinking freely, and was consequently somewhat pot valiant, paid no attention to this order, and when the police came to enforce it, he resisted them. He was accordingly arrested and taken off by two constables in the direction of a village where their chief constable was putting up. One of his escort being the very man he had refused to "tip," now gibed at him saying, "You would not give me a rupee! very well, wait—now you will be sent across the sea."* The prisoner quite believing this—for like most natives he had exaggerated notions as to the powers of the law—determined to escape, and watching his opportunity succeeded in doing so before they reached the village.

Being now an escaped offender, and therefore an outlaw

* Meaning "transported."

so to speak, he made up his mind to adopt a criminal career, and soon forming a gang, took to raiding villages, where, by looting and threatening the big traders, amassed a considerable amount of loot—successfully evading all attempts made by the police to arrest him. This went on for some time until at length, under a promise, made by the Superintendent of Police, my friend Probyn, that he would not be arrested, he agreed to meet him at a place called Selbari, where he came on the day appointed. Throwing himself at Probyn's feet he said he was ready to give himself up at once if the sahib would only try him himself. This Probyn told him was impossible, but offered to go with him himself to the district magistrate and do his best to get him off with as light a sentence as possible.

But to this Tulia would not agree. "No," he reiterated. "Let the sahib send for witnesses and try me himself, and if guilty, hang me on the tree we are sitting under—or send me to Dhulia jail. I am ready to be handcuffed now! But I will not be tried by any other sahib!" Being told again that what he suggested was impossible he said, "Very well, let me think the matter over till to-morrow." Then he asked to be allowed to go to see his people at Pimpulneer, and being granted a permit from Probyn, he went off. But on arriving there it appears that he went in for a drinking bout and becoming extremely drunk, walked into a cloth merchant's shop and turning the contents into the street, told his followers to scramble for them. Next morning he sent a message saying, "He had changed his mind and would not give himself up, but was returning to the jungle!"

It was now that Hafizullah came upon the scene, being deputed with a party of police to arrest this troublesome absconder, but they found it very difficult to hunt him down, for though he was occasionally seen, he always managed to elude them. He was even fired at but without any visible effect—thus giving currency to the belief that he wore some charm which made him bullet-proof!

At length one day, the inspector, happening to go alone to the house of a Patel or headman of a certain village, to make enquiries regarding some information he had received, Tulia turned the tables on him most effectually. Being in hiding near this village, he heard of the inspector's

visit, and while the latter was inside, formulating a plan for his arrest, surrounded this house and captured him instead!

Having him now completely at his mercy, he told the inspector that he was going to kill him but that he must first provide his own funeral feast, and placing him in a cart guarded by himself and one or two followers with drawn swords, they proceeded to a liquor shop in the village of Pimpulneer.

Here the inspector was forced to alight, and accompanied by his captors, who had now been joined by others of the gang, taken into the shop, where liquor being ordered, the party sat down to drink. They had been drinking for some time when Tulia, to have both hands free to take hold of the liquor jar, unthinkingly laid his sword aside.

Now was the inspector's chance, and promptly and pluckily he took it. Leaping up suddenly, he sprang at Tulia, and seizing him with both hands by the hair, pressed his head to the ground and shouted loudly for help.

Two or three constables, who on hearing the capture of their officer had come up, and were hovering about outside on the chance of being able to rescue him, now rushed to his assistance and soon secured the prisoner, for his friends so far from assisting him, had fled at the first alarm. He was eventually convicted and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

Soon after the completion of his sentence, he was appointed as a watchman on a West Khandesh road, where he did very well for a time, until a charge of rape was brought against him, when he absconded again.

He had been absconding for some months, all attempts to recapture him having failed, when one day as Probyn was driving along the Selbari road, he suddenly came out from behind a babul tree and gave himself up! He climbed quietly into the dogcart and was driven at once to the District Magistrate's camp, where he was tried again, and being committed to the sessions, was finally convicted and sentenced, this time to transportation for life. Thus ended the career of as remarkable a criminal as the Presidency had produced up to that time, about the year 1875. But though so noted a criminal he owed his notoriety rather

to the boldness and originality of his methods, for the crimes he had committed were mostly robbing and offences against women, and, so far as I remember, he had never been accused or suspected of murder.

* * * * * *

Inspector Hafizullah's plucky capture of this celebrated criminal brings back to my mind a similar but much finer feat performed by that famous police officer, Sir F—— S——r, when an Assistant-Superintendent of Police of the District of Nagar. The story of this notable achievement, which has been the admiration of all his brother officers for so many years, was told me by his son—then himself a Deputy Inspector-General of Police stationed at Ahmedabad.

He was proceeding on leave at the time, and I had been appointed to relieve him. While engaged in taking over charge of the office, I was interrupted by a visit from the landlord of the bungalow, which I had also taken over. He was a very courteous native gentleman, and in the course of conversation informed me that the house had been occupied by my father, who thirty years ago had commanded a brigade in Ahmedabad.

I mentioned this later to S——, and we then discovered that our respective fathers had been friends. It was then that he told me of some interesting episodes in the life of Sir F—— S——r, amongst them the following remarkable exploit which I have already referred to.

It appears that soon after the Indian Mutiny the Bhils in the Nagar and Khandesh districts started a rising of their own, giving considerable trouble and anxiety to the authorities by attacking and looting villages, etc., thus keeping the police and the military very busy in their efforts to quell these disturbances.

Amongst the Naiks or leaders of these Bhils was one called Babaji, who, having collected a gang of dangerous bad characters round him, had become a terror to the neighbourhood he frequented and evaded all attempts of the police to capture him. However, after considerable trouble, Captain H——, the Superintendent of Police in Nagar, managed to corner him by surrounding a hut in which he and his men were concealed. But notwithstanding his desperate position he refused to surrender when

called on to do so, replying to Captain H—— "If you wish to take me prisoner, come yourself. I will not be taken by anyone except a sahib."

Exasperated by the insolence of this challenge, which was probably the effect it was intended to have, Captain H—— entered boldly into the hut, when Babaji, who was armed with an ancient match-lock, fired and shot him dead—then, with the greater number of his followers, broke out of the hut and escaped.

The direction of the operations now developed on Sir F—— S——r, who was Captain H——'s assistant at the time. The murder of his superior officer—so far from deterring him, made him all the more determined to arrest the murderer, and continuing the pursuit, he finally got on his tracks, eventually succeeding in arresting him in a most plucky and ingenious manner.

Having marked him down at length in the valley, in the vicinity of which there was a large, deep pool of water, he discovered him one morning bathing in this pool. Surrounding the valley with his men, S——, who had been disguised as a native throughout, approached the pool, and slipping quietly, swam close up to the bather, then, diving suddenly, seized the unsuspecting Babaji by the legs and dragged him under water.

Being an exceptionally good swimmer and thoroughly at home in the water he had no difficulty in mastering his prisoner whom, half drowned and terrified out of his wits, he brought ashore safely, and, I presume, formally re-arrested!

Meanwhile the rest of the gang, seeing their leader captured, scattered at once, but the greater number were secured, and together with their chief, were sent in under a strong escort to Nagar, where the news of this great haul having already preceded them, the police received quite an ovation.

As the party reached Nagar, they were met by the band of the regiment and played into the station, a compliment never known to have been accorded to a party of police before, thus proving how important the capture of so notable a criminal as Babaji was considered.

Quite apart from this, however, the action of the

military authorities was particularly gratifying to Sir F—— S——r, for, as it happened, there had been a certain amount of friction between the police and military which this gracious action quite removed. I was much interested to learn that the band referred to belonged to my father's regiment. Sir F—— S——r subsequently held the office of Commissioner of Police, Bombay, in which capacity he earned quite a world-wide reputation, and was much liked and respected by all classes, and amongst the large native commercial community was especially popular.

It was during this period of his successful career, while employed in the investigation of a famous and sensational case of poisoning, that an incident occurred which showed the reputation he had acquired for finding out the truth and bringing offenders to justice. The case was a most important one, involving many persons of high rank. These, fearing he would discover their complicity in the crime, offered, through intermediaries, to pay him one lakh of rupees for merely giving up the direction of the enquiry which he was conducting personally!

Needless to say he refused the offer, and being naturally very much incensed at such a suggestion being made to him, promptly reported the matter to the Government. Yet strange as it may seem the reply he received was virtually a snub, some precocious young civilian in the Secretariat writing to the effect that "The time of the Government was too precious to be taken up with such twaddle!"

Soon after this, at Aden, while on his voyage home on leave, Sir F—— S——r was much surprised at hearing that a fussy globe-trotting American was enquiring for him all over the ship. Wondering who this individual could be and why he wished to see him, his curiosity induced him to reveal himself.

The stranger, looking at him curiously for a while then said, "He had heard a story about him which had struck him greatly, and that he would be glad to know if it was true and whether he was really the man who had refused a bribe, of a sum so enormous as a lakh of rupees, in the poisoning case?"

"Yes," replied Sir F—— S——r quietly, "I am the

person you refer to." "Say then—shake," cried the American excitedly, and extending a huge powerful paw seized Sir F—— S——r's hand and nearly shook it off! But when he heard what reply the latter had received from the Government to his report about the proffered bribe his face was a picture!

He then asked many questions about our administration of India, and after an animated conversation, finally took his departure, observing as he bid Sir F—— S——r farewell, "Wall, I guess you Britishers will keep India!"

It appeared that in the course of his globe-trotting he was visiting Aden, and seeing in the passenger list of the steamer the name of Sir F—— S——r, whom he had very evidently heard of, he had come on board, for the express purpose of interviewing him.

CHAPTER XXIX

Small-game shooting in India—The season for this sport—Snipe offers best sport—Arrival of these birds—Two varieties of true snipe—Other kinds, the jack and painted snipe—Migratory birds—Large bag can be made—Quail—Small charges and 20-bore preferable—River and bush quail—Partridge—Three kinds—Painted, grey, and black—The last best for table—Sand-grouse—Strong on the wing—Floriken finest game bird in India—Peculiar habit of the cock—Native explanation—Very plentiful in places—Indian bustard—A huge bird—Good sport for rook rifle—Peafowl and Indian plover—Ortalon, too small for sport—Snared by natives—Excellent eating—Wild-fowl—Many kinds—Found on tanks—Very numerous—The blue-winged teal—An excellent bird—Cotton and whistling teal—Not worth shooting—Widgeon and pochards—Swarm in thousands—Mallard—Similar to the English bird—The spotted bill and gadwall—The pin-tailed duck—The red-crested pochard and white-eyed duck—The shoveller—Wild geese—Two varieties—The common or grey-bag, and the pink-footed goose—A curious hybrid bird, half goose and half duck—Bittern, same as the English bird—Ground game—Hare only—No rabbits in India—Hare afford good coursing with Persian hounds.

THE hunting of dangerous animals having been my business, so to speak, for some years of my service in India, and my chief amusement always, I have probably devoted less time to small-game shooting than the majority of Indian sportsmen. Nevertheless, there were occasional long periods in my service, as when stationed in districts devoid of big game, where I was compelled to satisfy my sporting instincts with this less exciting form of sport; hence, necessarily acquired some knowledge of this subject.

In these circumstances it has occurred to me that having now said all I have to say on the subject of big-game shooting in the Bombay Presidency, I cannot do better than to give a brief description of the game birds of this part of India, together with some account of small-game shooting as carried out in India generally.

The sport may be said to begin on or about the 15th

October, and to last till 15th March or thereabouts, the contents of the bag depending largely on the locality and season.

Of the enormous variety of small game to be obtained in India the snipe, I think, takes first place, since it affords quite the prettiest sport of all Indian game birds.

No sooner has the cold weather set in, about the beginning of November, than the snipe begin arriving; on first alighting, after their long journey from the north, they are naturally in poor condition, but soon pick up and are then quite as rapid on the wing as English birds.

There are two varieties of the true snipe—one rather smaller than the common snipe, with a pin tail, shorter bill, and beautifully marked bars on the end of the wing. They are supposed to come to India from the Straits of Singapore or China.

There is also the Jack snipe which lie very close, often rising within a yard or two of the sportsman's feet. Painted snipe are also to be met with in the marshes—a large, clumsy looking bird, with an owl-like flight, and not worth shooting either from the sporting or pot point of view.

Snipe, like quail and all migratory birds, are subject to good and bad seasons, being sometimes comparatively scarce. Forty or fifty couple are considered a fair bag, but in Sind one of two hundred will often be made by a good gun, and even this number, I am told, has frequently been doubled! A friend of mine and myself once accounted for one hundred and fifty couple at a place called Larkana in the Sind district, but this kind of shooting being merely a matter of sufficient cartridges was not much to my taste.

Christmas shooting camps are generally held in all the good, small-game shooting districts, and very fine sport is usually enjoyed; especially by men living in large cities like Bombay. These camps are very enjoyable from a social point of view, but the wholesale slaughter of birds, which is the chief object of these meetings, did not appeal to me. I preferred to go out morning and evening when on tour, picking up a sufficient number of birds for the pot; or when near enough to headquarters, to send in to friends to whom small game is always an agreeable change from the perpetual diet of fowl.

Partridge, both grey and painted, grey and rain quail, sand grouse, florikin, bustard, hares, etc., are all fairly common in the Bombay Presidency; and in Sind is also found the black partridge. With regard to the grey quail, a good morning's work should easily account for fifty brace or more to each gun, but these birds being migratory, much depends on the season. In some years, they actually swarm, and in others they prove comparatively scarce.

The ordinary Indian quail is about the size of the English bird, the tips of the wings (*primaries*) being marked with dark bars. The hen birds have not the dark brown bands or collar on the throat which distinguish the cocks.

Full charges of powder are not necessary for these birds, rising as they mostly do close to the gun, and of shot Nos. 8 or 9 are the most effective. I always loaded my own cartridges as being more economical than buying them ready loaded, and economy becomes a consideration when one hundred or more cartridges are used in a morning's shoot.

I have invariably used a 20-bore, finding it lighter and handier than a 12-bore, for small-game shooting; though, doubtless, it requires to be held somewhat straighter than a larger bore.

Quail fly extremely swiftly, with a delightful whirring noise and an awkward twisting flight. Both quail and partridge can be shot to a dog, and I have often had good sport with a steady spaniel, but shooting with dogs in India is risky work, as they are sure to come to grief in time, either from sunstroke, snake bite or alligators.

The little rain quail which usually comes in soon after the monsoon has burst, are smaller than the grey quail; the cocks are prettily marked with black crests covered with small spots.

The jungle bush quail, another variety, is not worth shooting. They are very common, and have a habit of hiding very close in thick bush or patch of grass, and on being approached, of suddenly whirring off in all directions, with startling effects to a novice, especially if he should happen to be following up a wounded tiger at the time!

The francolin, or painted partridge, is fairly common, and will often be put up singly, generally followed by its

mate. They are very handsome birds, and afford good shooting, rising something like the English partridge. They are mostly found in green corn-fields, large patches of high grass, or on the banks of nullahs or ravines. They are not particularly good eating.

Grey partridge are very common, and not thought much of by Indian sportsmen, either from the sporting or table point of view. The flesh is tough and extremely tasteless; in fact, hardly eatable unless the bird be stuffed with bacon, then roasted with layers of bacon wrapped round it. These birds are found in bushes and hedges round villages. The natives catch them in pits and often keep them as pets.

We now come to the black partridge, found mostly in Sind. It is a large and very handsome bird with beautiful black plumage plentifully spotted with white on the breast. On rising it towers for a few yards, then flies straight forwards giving a fairly easy shot.

These birds are generally to be found in patches of high grass near water, in cotton fields and beds of rivers where there is thick cover. They have a shrill peculiar call, and are very noisy, especially in the early mornings and about sundown. Their flesh is tender and excellent eating.

Of sand-grouse, probably so called because they frequent open, sandy plains, there are three varieties, one very large and the other two with pin-tails. The largest kind are rare, and mostly to be found in Sind. Sand-grouse squat or lie very close. They are very strong on the wing, and it requires hard hitting to bring them down. They are good eating, but tough, and should be skinned before being cooked. By watching over, or near water, where these birds come to drink, any number may be shot.

Floriken, without doubt the finest game bird in India, arrive soon after the rains, and are found in rush-grown, swampy places, and in high grass, also on plains where the grass has been burnt. The cock bird is about the size of a pheasant, and very handsome, with neck and under part of the body black; while the back is mottled like a bustard. On the back of its head are six thin, upturned feathers, with small tufts at the end, somewhat resembling the crest

of a peacock. These birds rise very gracefully, towering to about fifteen yards before soaring away, and are very easy to shoot. The cock bird has a peculiar habit of jumping up high in the air, three or four times in rapid succession, and at intervals of six or seven yards. The natives declare this is done to attract the attention of the hen birds. The latter are of a light brown colour, prettily marked with dark brown bars. They have not the crest feathers of the cock bird. Another peculiarity of the floriken is the rose-pink tint at the roots of the short feathers, or down on the breast and under the wings, but which can only be seen by parting this down with the fingers or by blowing it aside.

I remember on one occasion, when suffering from a sprained ankle, shooting a number of these fine birds from my pony, a quiet steady beast, my men slowly beating the grass on either side as I rode quietly along.

In parts of Khandesh and Guzerat, floriken are very plentiful, but their numbers depend much on the season. Their flesh is excellent, but as they feed entirely on beetles, grasshoppers and blister fly, it is sometimes tainted. On the whole, however, the floriken is considered the best bird for the table in India.

The Indian greater bustard is also a splendid game bird, standing about three and a half feet high, and weighing nearly three stone. It has a flat black crest on the head, the neck is white, while the plumage on the back is a dark-mottled brown colour. The feathers of the Indian bustard are invaluable for salmon flies.

The birds afford capital sport with a rook rifle. In Khandesh, where they are very common, I have shot five bustards in a morning with a Holland and Holland ·250 rifle, at an average distance of one hundred yards each. The flesh is of a brown colour.

The only other land game birds are (1) the peafowl, which, being held in reverence by natives, are seldom shot; (2) the golden plover, much like the English bird; and lastly, the ortolan, which are too small to shoot, but are snared in hundreds by the natives, and sold in the market in many parts of India, and are excellent eating.

We now come to wild-fowl of which there are many

kinds: first, the teal, precisely like the English one, which begin to arrive directly the monsoon is over, and are generally found on tanks, together with the duck (widgeon and pochards). The birds are often so numerous that the sportsman, creeping up cautiously to close range, may bring down a dozen or more with both barrels, for they rise and fly so closely packed together. They are well worth shooting, too, being excellent eating.

Another very good eating bird is the blue-winged, or gangamy teal, which arrive in vast flocks later on in the cold season. The cotton and whistling teal are also found in large numbers on the vast sheets of water which do not dry up in the hot season; but they are not worth powder and shot, their flesh being both fishy and muddy.

As the season advances, widgeon and pochards swarm in their thousands on the larger lakes, especially in Sind, and the sportsman may fire away as many cartridges as he can make, or has the means to purchase, should he be so extravagantly inclined.

Our excellent English mallard, or a bird absolutely similar in every respect, will form the major portion of the bag; and next, the spotted-bill duck and the gadwall—a smaller duck than the mallard, with mottled-brown back, chestnut patch on the wings, and white belly. Then the pin-tail duck, a beautiful bird with its very peculiar long, pointed tail, brown head, prettily blue-mottled back, white breast, and blackish slate-brown legs and feet. It is larger than the mallard, flies at great speed, and is very good eating.

Widgeon are somewhat rare. They are much smaller than the mallard, and when flying make a shrill whistling sound. The head and upper part of the neck of this bird are of a chestnut-red with a pale-yellow band over the crown. The bill is of a bright-bluish colour, breast light-pink, back mottled-gray, and tail blackish-grey-blue lead colour.

The red-crested pochard has a most unmistakable red head, surmounted with a yellow crest or band; back and wings brown, with white patches at both ends of wings; while the lower part of neck, breast and belly are black, and the tail, legs and feet bright-red; a most brilliant little

specimen of the duck tribe. The hen bird, however, is more soberly arrayed.

There is, besides, the white-eyed duck, and another still smaller pochard, the tufted duck, a beautiful dark bird with a large silky crest of black feathers, a white bar on the wings, white stomach and legs, and bill of a lead colour. There is a beautiful glossy green and purple sheen over the plumage of this bird.

Lastly, comes the shoveller, a larger bird than the above, though not so large as the mallard. It can be easily identified by its large, broad bill of a dark-slate colour. These birds are common, but are not good eating.

There are two varieties of the wild goose, both of which are to be found in Sind. One is the common wild or grey wing goose of England; the other the pink-footed goose, a smaller bird than the first. As with all wild geese, they are very difficult to approach, having a habit of lying concealed, huddled up together in batches of sixty or more in clusters of reeds or rushes, and always a long distance from the banks of the lakes or other waters in which they have taken up their temporary abode. They fly in long lines when travelling, and it is a very pleasing sound, heralding as it does the approach of the cold season, to hear their harsh grating call as they pass, flying high, over the camp or bungalow in the early hours of the morning, on their way to their winter quarters.

But welcome as is the arrival of these great birds to the sportsman, their advent is by no means so agreeable to the Indian agriculturist, for they do a deal of damage to their crops, chiefly grain, a sort of vetch to which they are particularly partial.

There is another curious bright-russet winged white-breasted bird, a kind of cross between a goose and a duck, which seems indigenous to India. It is called, for some unknown reason, Brahminy duck in Bengal. These seemingly hybrid creatures are always seen in couples, and seldom met with except on rivers. Though game-like in appearance, they are never shot by sportsmen as their flesh is uneatable. Bittern are often put up out of long thick rushes on the edges of tanks and nullahs. They are precisely the same as the English bird and fairly good eating.

THE INDIAN HARE

The only small ground game are hares, for there are no rabbits in India. The Indian hare is much smaller than the English beast. They are to be met with almost everywhere in open rocky ground or scrub. On being started they bolt much the same as rabbits, and require quick snap-shooting. Like the Indian fox—a pretty little silver-white creature with black tips to their brush—they afford excellent coursing with Persian greyhounds.

CHAPTER XXX

Remnants of Babajee gang—Joined by the Barwattis—A formidable coalition—Rounding them up—Another European officer shot dead—The gang finally destroyed—More about tigers—A tigress and three cubs—Monkeys announce their presence—I shoot the tigress—Driving out the cubs—Two rolled over—Beaters dispose of third—Wounded tigers often lost—Cases in point—(1) A tiger on an island—The beat begun—A momentary glimpse—Snap-shooting—Crashing through the jungle—Mysterious disappearance—"Here he is!"—Found dead under water!—A mangy specimen—A remarkable dying effort—(2) Another instance—Three tigers put up—Two soon disposed of—In pursuit of the third—Marked down—A snap-shot again—Concluded he was missed—Further search abandoned—Found dead the next day!—Man-eating tigers—Happily now rare—Indenting on ancient history—Alarming news at 5 a.m.—Camp in transit—Attacked by man-eater—Disobedience of orders—A bullock driver carried off—Panic-stricken servants—Pursuit taken up—The body found half eaten—Man-eating tigers on high road—The traffic held up—Seven hundred human victims!—Mail cart attacked—Tiger jumps from a hillock—Horse badly scarred—Shown to travellers as a curiosity.

THE members of Babaji's gang, who had escaped when their leader was arrested, though scattered for the time, soon came together again; and being joined by remnants of other broken-up gangs, and subsequently by some Barwattis,* became a formidable coalition, and for many years gave considerable trouble to the police.

Many of the members being practically outlaws already were desperate men, to whom a crime more or less mattered little, for in any case, if arrested, they knew their punishment was certain; hence, on the principle of "as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb," they continued to pursue their criminal courses.

The police, assisted by the military, had been indefatigable in their pursuit of the gang, but were greatly handicapped by the conduct of the villagers, who were in such

* A criminal tribe peculiar to Goozerat.

deadly terror of these men that they would give no information of their movements; and once or twice, when located by the police, even connived at their escape!

Finally, when all other measures had failed, the authorities decided to employ mounted men, and on the recommendation of Colonel H——, the then Inspector-General of Police, G——, a promising young officer of the 2nd Bombay Lancers, was drafted into the police and stationed on special duty at Kathiawar, as a suitable centre from which to conduct the operations.

He had not been there long when one morning he received information that the dacoits were in a village about sixteen miles distant. He rode off at once, accompanied by his sowars, and on arrival found the gang entrenched, or rather, concealed in a pit which they had dug.

This method of defensive warfare had doubtless been adopted at the suggestion of the Barwattis, for the particular tribe of these people, who were now members of the gang, are in the habit of entrenching themselves in pits, which they fortify, erecting a standard in the centre under which they fight.

In these circumstances it would perhaps have been wiser, as the military critics subsequently observed, to have attacked the entrenchments on foot, and in skirmishing order; but G——, being young, and full of military ardour, probably thinking also that his men would feel more at home mounted than on foot, charged the stronghold at once.

The dacoits, most of whom had fire-arms of sorts, reserved their fire till the attacking party were within a few yards of their trench and then fired a volley. G——, who was leading the charge, was struck by seven bullets and fell dead; but his Resildar,* assuming command at once, led the men on, and a terrible revenge they took, for in the hand-to-hand encounter that ensued the greater number of their opponents were killed outright or cut down.

G—— had been so great a favourite with all classes that all the Europeans, and many natives of Kathiawar,

* Native cavalry officer.

subscribing to a fund, erected a monument to his memory at Rajkote, which was unveiled by Lord H——, the then Governor of Bombay, who in a few well-chosen words paid a tribute to the gallantry and devotion to duty he had displayed.

Shortly after his transfer to the police, he had spent some days with me in my camp near the Chap-Panee ravine, and I well remember his delight at having been selected for the task of hunting down these dacoits. This ravine is—or used to be—a favourite haunt of tigers, and I had seldom, if ever, drawn a blank there.

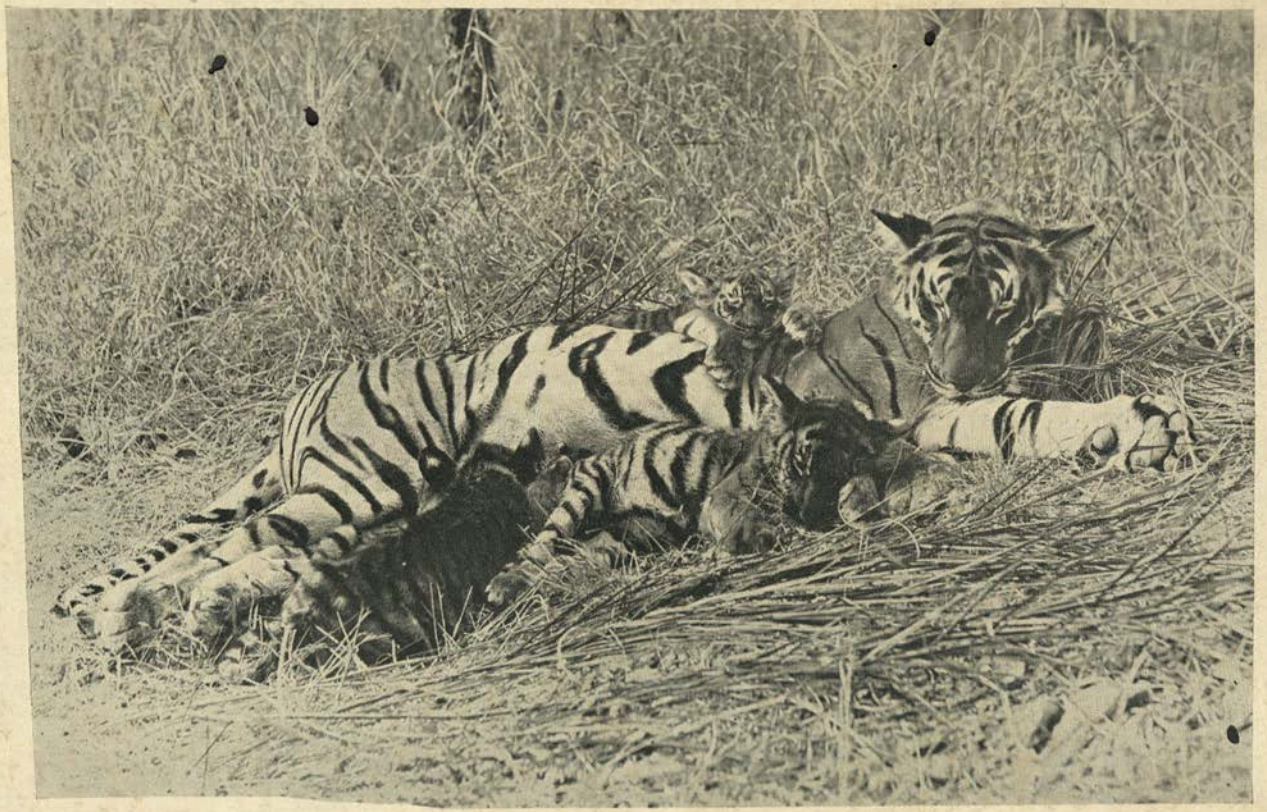
On the particular occasion I refer to, it did not belie its reputation, for we had not been long there when we received information of a tigress and three cubs.

Having arrived at the jungle and taken up our position, we sent word to the beaters to advance. Presently I heard a troop of monkeys chattering loudly, as these animals always do when a tiger or panther is on foot, and at the same instant I saw the tigress emerge slowly from a mass of cypress and come quietly towards me.

I allowed her to approach within ten yards or so of my position, then fired, and the bullet striking her fairly between the eyes killed her on the spot. Meanwhile the beaters were advancing, driving the cubs before them; small beasts they proved to be, each about three feet long. G——, who was to my right, now had his chance, and very good use he made of it, rolling two of them over in fine style; the third broke back, but was soon despatched by the beaters. Their mother, whom I had shot, proved to be a large handsome beast with a fine dark-coloured skin. I had this pegged out alongside the one of a large tiger I had bagged some days before, the two making a goodly show.

Altogether this shoot was a great success in that we had accounted for every animal put up, and although three were only little ones, still, in tiger shooting it is not always that every tiger seen is bagged, more especially when hunting these animals on foot, for unless badly wounded, they often get away.

But sometimes, even if fatally wounded, a tiger may sneak off unobserved to die in some dense jungle, or



TIGRESS AND HER CUBS.

[*To face p.* 232.

perhaps an unknown cave; and is then lost to the sportsman, as nearly happened once to my father-in-law, Colonel W——, of the Indian Survey Department, and his chief, Major O——s, who, but for an accidental discovery of the carcase, would have lost a tiger they had shot.

They were out shooting in Seonee, a district once so noted for its tigers, and as being the scene of the adventures described in R. C. Sterndale's famous book. Information was brought to them one May morning by the villagers of a tiger having been marked down in some jungle on a small island, in the bed of the Weingunga River, where he was said to be lying up.

They had only one elephant out with them, but as he was an exceptionally staunch animal, Major O——s ordered the howdah to be put on him, and accompanied by my father-in-law, who was only a subaltern at the time, and quite inexperienced in sport, they proceeded to the jungle.

On arriving there, O——s, an old shikari, and thoroughly acquainted with tigers and their ways, examining the place carefully, found the island, which was surrounded by water on one side and dry shingle on the other, was a mass of jhamin, or wild damson bushes, affording excellent cover for the tiger. The villagers declaring he was still there, O——s stationed the elephant at the head of the island and ordered the men, who had agreed to act as beaters, to beat right through it from the other end. Soon a tremendous din arose, as the men advanced, all shouting loudly, and suddenly the tiger appeared at the edge of the island, but seeing the elephant, as quickly drew back into the bushes, though not before O——s had time to raise his rifle and fire a snap-shot at him.

The report of the rifle was answered immediately by a loud, angry roar from the tiger, as if protesting against his privacy being disturbed, then came the sound of some heavy animal crashing through the bushes, followed by a tremendous splash as if it had plunged into the water.

The two sportsmen, fully under the impression that the tiger had got away untouched, now descended from the howdah and following his tracks through the jungle, were agreeably surprised to find some blood on the shingle, and

walking on further, came upon his footprints on the spot from which he had evidently jumped into the water.

The villagers, entering this water, which on an average was about five feet deep, waded across, but could find no footprints on the opposite side, and were still searching, when suddenly one of the men, who had not as yet come out of the water, called out excitedly, "Here he is, here he is!"

This sudden and decidedly disquieting announcement might well have caused a panic, but for the fact that the man who had made it, was now seen peering into the water, and prodding with his spear at something underneath it. He now explained that when he was crossing over he had been testing the depth of the water, when he felt something soft, and investigating further, concluded it was the carcase of the tiger! The others now assisting him, they soon dragged the body to the bank, and sure enough it proved to be that of the tiger, which with its last dying effort had evidently plunged into the water, intending doubtless to swim across, but being too badly wounded, had probably been unable to rise to the surface, and was drowned or had died while in the act of swimming across.

The animal proved to be a small and very mangy tigress, but must have been possessed of extraordinary vitality, for on examining the carcase later it was found that the bullet (an explosive 12-bore) had struck her far back in the stomach, and exploding inside had burst the diaphragm and made mincemeat of the liver, and yet she had sufficient energy left, not only to travel seventy measured paces, but to jump into the water from the bank!

On another occasion in the same district, Colonel W——, while out with D——, the Forest Officer, again nearly lost a tiger which they had shot. They had received information of three tigers, said to be in some jungle on the banks of the Weingunga. D—— having a good number of elephants with him at the time, they went out at once.

By three o'clock in the afternoon they had bagged two out of the three, then went after the third, and having marked him down, posted a pad elephant on the other side of the river as a stop.

The tiger, driven out by the beaters, made for the river,

intending to swim across and escape; but seeing the elephant, was re-entering the jungle, when both the sportsmen fired at him.

As the tiger had not spoken to either of the shots they could not tell whether he was hit or not, but as he eventually got away without being fired at again, they concluded he had been missed; and as it was now getting late, and they were a long way from home, they padded the two tigers they had shot and returned to camp.

Next day, however, a large party of villagers came into the station carrying a dead tiger slung on to a pole, which they took to the Magistrate's office, where they claimed, and were paid, the Government reward of Rs.50. They made no claim to having shot the animal themselves, but said they had found it lying dead under a tree; near the jungle where the Sahibs had shot the two the day before. However, they were allowed to retain the reward, which, added to the Bakshish they had already received for giving information, was, to men in their position, quite a fortune.

The two cases I have quoted prove how easily a tiger, even when mortally wounded, may be lost; and there have been doubtless many others of the kind, as well as of tigers, seemingly only slightly wounded, who have got off and have died eventually in some jungle miles away from where they were originally put up.

* * * * * *

Of man-eating tigers, too, Colonel W—— has some experiences to relate, two of which I venture to repeat, for as these once dreaded beasts are now happily less numerous one must generally indent on ancient history to obtain accounts of their exploits.

In the first case he tells of, the narrator was encamped in the civil station of Seonee, many years ago, and was roused at five o'clock one morning by his servants with the thrilling information that a man-eater had just attacked the Forest Officer's servants who were bringing their master's camp into the station.

The latter it appeared had warned his men not to start on their journey till after daybreak, as the man-eating tiger was known to be prowling about on that road; but

neglecting his warning, they had started at 2 a.m., trusting doubtless to fate after the manner of their kind.

Conveying part of the camp equipage were some pack-bullocks, accompanied by the driver, who was walking behind them, when suddenly the tiger pouncing on him carried him off into a dense jungle near the road where he had been probably lying in wait.

The servants, panic-stricken, made no attempt to rescue the man, but, leaving him to his fate, had come running into the station with the news.

Colonel W——, together with the Superintendent of Police and the Civil Surgeon, rode out at once to the spot, which was some five miles distant.

Here they soon found the broad track left by the tiger as he had dragged his victim through the jungle, and following along this for some considerable distance, they came upon the remains of the latter lying in the densest portion of the jungle.

The tiger, like most man-eaters, was evidently a very cunning beast, and had no intention of running any risks by returning to finish his kill; for he had already eaten most of it, the upper portion of the body being all that was left of the unfortunate man, but this was intact, except for a wound in the neck where the beast had seized him.

It was hopeless to look for the tiger without elephants, the jungle being too extensive and dense. He was shot eventually, but not till a year or more had passed, during which time he had added many other human victims to his list.

The second case referred to, relates to events in the later sixties, when man-eaters were quite common in, and in districts adjacent to, Seonee, and more especially on the high road from Jubbulpur to Nagpur, a distance of one hundred and sixty-eight miles and passing through the Civil Station of Seonee, which lies about half way.

On practically the whole length of this road, but particularly at a long pass or crossing of three miles, called the Korai Ghat, a party of what I may call professional man-eating tigers, had taken up their quarters, who, lying in wait in small hillocks above the road, would

pounce suddenly on drivers of bullock carts and carry them off into the jungle below.

During the three years that Colonel W—— was stationed at Seonee, this Ghat was often held up for so long as three months at a time by these man-eaters, one of whom was credited with having killed and eaten seven hundred human victims before he was eventually destroyed.

On one occasion the mail cart, carrying the English mail, a specially well-organized service with a booked speed of fourteen miles an hour, was proceeding at this pace a few miles from Seonee, when it was attacked by a man-eater, which suddenly jumped on to it from a hillock where he had, as usual, been lying concealed.

Probably his intention was to carry off either the driver or the syce, but as it happened, he lighted on the horses, one of whom he clawed all down the quarters. The beast eventually recovered, but was badly scarred, and for many years after the driver used to point him out to travellers, with great pride, as the horse which had survived a man-eater's attack!

CONCLUSION

THE last chapter brings my narrative to a close. Except to the keen sportsman anxious to learn something of small-game shooting in India, Chapter XXIX. will, I fear, make dull reading; but in the pursuit of prey so harmless, startling adventures can hardly be expected. The previous chapters, however, will, I trust, prove more generally entertaining.

In my account of adventures with tigers and other dangerous game, I have, as I proposed when setting out to write my story, confined myself to recording those only which seemed to me to possess some special interest, for bare tales of animals slaughtered are apt to become wearisome if too often told.

I have endeavoured, therefore, to make each incident recorded as interesting as possible, consistent with truth and, when opportunity offered, have given facts and figures derived from personal observation and experience regarding the various animals I have encountered, together with their description, hoping that this information may be useful to sportsmen contemplating a shooting trip to India.

At the same time it must be borne in mind that I am writing of sport in that country as it was some twenty-five or thirty years ago! With the progress of civilization and clearing of the forests, game—more especially tigers—has decreased. Big-game shooting is not so easily obtainable, nor is it to be had at such comparatively little cost.

However, with an exercise of patience, tact and judgment, as well as a judicious cultivation of the natives, much may yet be accomplished. But above all it is advisable to obtain introductions to the civil authorities of the district, or district selected, especially the Police and Forest

Officers who have the means—personally or through their subordinates—of smoothing many difficulties, or of creating them! The goodwill of these officers is, therefore, very desirable to acquire.

I regret now that I did not keep an exact record of the number of tigers I have slain. As Tiger Slayer to the Bombay Government, however, I had to submit a weekly return of tigers killed, and during my term of office the figures, so far as I remember, reached about two hundred. These did not include the number I killed before being appointed to that office, or during any period of leave. I may safely say, therefore, that the number of tigers I have shot cannot be much under three hundred in all.

My biggest bag for one year in Khandesh was thirty-one, and for one week, six. At one time, indeed, I remember being almost tired of shooting tigers, they were so plentiful, and in so many cases shot without any greater effort on my part than holding the rifle straight.

The largest bag of tigers on record for one day, so far as I know, was in a beat in which Lord Harris was present, the one that fell to his rifle being a very large, heavy beast with an enormous head, the largest, I believe, that Rowland Ward has ever set up.

I always shot on foot or, when more convenient or advisable to do so, from a tree or macharo; but even in these cases, it was often necessary to follow the wounded beast on foot, instances of which have been given in previous chapters.

Many of my earlier adventures with big game were experienced in company with my old friend and mentor, the late Colonel Probyn, under whose kindly and able guidance I embarked on my sporting career, and to whom I attribute much of my subsequent success; for taking him as my model, I wisely decided to follow in his footsteps, a resolution I happily adhered to.

Oliver Probyn is still a name to conjure with in Khandesh. In addition to being a thorough sportsman, he was the beau ideal of a soldier and a gentleman. His influence among the Bhils was so great that his word was law, and yet he was loved as much as he was feared.

His appearance, though somewhat rough—the result,

probably, of his having passed so much of his life amongst wild tribes—was nevertheless distinguished and commanding. Altogether he impressed me more than any man I had ever met.

The above is my recollection of him some thirty years ago, and since it was under his tuition that I started on the adventures which have furnished me with material for my narrative, it is but fitting I should end it with this tribute to his memory.

THE END

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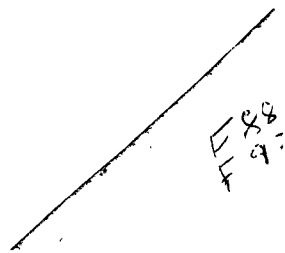

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